

The University of Chicago

AN ORIENTATION
OF HUME'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

1932

By
WILHELM ANDERSON

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1935

The University of Chicago

AN ORIENTATION
OF HUME'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

1932

By

WILHELM ANDERSON

Private Edition, Distributed by
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO LIBRARIES
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1935



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

All numbers refer to pages unless otherwise specifically designated.

- B. Burton, J. H. Life and Correspondence of David Hume. 2 vols. Edinburgh, 1846.
- E. Hume's Enquiries concerning the Human Understanding (1748) and concerning the Principles of Morals (1751). Edited by Selby-Bigge. 2d ed.; Oxford, 1902.
- Ess. Essays Moral, Political, and Literary. Edited by T. H. Green and T. H. Grosse. New edition in 2 vols. London, 1889.
- G. Greig, J. Y. T. David Hume. London, 1931.
- H. Letters of David Hume to William Strahan. Edited by B. Birkbeck Hill. Oxford, 1888.
- L. Letters of David Hume. Edited by J. Y. T. Greig. 2 vols. Oxford, 1932.
- Laird Laird, John. Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature. New York, 1932.
- T. Hume's Treatise of Human Nature, Parts I and II, 1739; Part III, 1740. Edited by Selby-Bigge. Oxford, 1896.

SECTION III

Method Used in this Study

It was hinted earlier that the formulation of method to be used in this research was no inconsiderable part of the present undertaking. If knowledge be defined as that upon which we can agree, it becomes immediately manifest that much of the Humean literature is not such. The prevailing disagreements among competent critics would seem to indicate that there is some difficulty or obscurity in the subject matter. The subject matter is Hume's philosophy. But what is his philosophy? He has left us two accounts of his philosophy. We have his Treatise and we have his Enquiries. And in addition to these we have his two works on religion, viz., the Natural History of Religion (1757) and the Dialogues on Natural Religion (1779). If these several works are read as they stand, without interpreting one in the light of some one or more of the others, we shall find a certain consistency between the Treatise, the History of Religion, Philo's position in the Dialogues, and the main parts of the first Enquiry. The divergence arises in the second Enquiry in assigning (very loosely it would seem) different principles as the ultimate springs of human nature. We shall come back to this point a little later.

The assumption upon which all exegetical and critical researches rest is that if other investigators follow precisely the same method the same conclusions will result. It is only in this sense that knowledge can arise from exegetical researches. Now if there is to arise any knowledge from the present performance, it would seem imperative that we give a very clear, precise, and full account of method, otherwise our conclusions can lay claim only to opinion. We, however, wish to establish conclusions which may wear the character of agreements, and hence of knowledge, and for that reason we propose to give an account of our method and how it arose.

First of all, Hume's philosophical writings were read, and obscurities, difficulties, and inconsistencies noted. A careful survey was then made of the development of English ethical thought from Bacon and Hobbes up to and including the writings of Adam Smith. This survey threw considerable light on the philosophical and religious problems and controversies which gave rise to the Treatise. In this survey Hume was again read and his relation to

his predecessors and contemporaries noted. The Humean literature was next consulted with a careful indexing of disagreements of interpretation.

Following upon this preliminary survey, the notes on Hume's predecessors and contemporaries, the notes on Hume himself, and the index of disagreements of interpretation were carefully studied with the view of a possible solution of the major problems involved. It was out of this study that the present arrangement and form of this performance took its rise. We found that the problems connected with Hume's moral philosophy and its orientation fell conveniently into ten divisions which answer to the chapters of this study. An outline of this undertaking was then drawn up in ten separate papers with the problems and questions to be dealt with in each paper clearly stated, a summary of which has already been given in this, the first chapter, under Section 2 entitled "The Scope of this Study."

The ten papers were then conveniently arranged so that they could be easily gotten at and consulted, and the Treatise, the second Enquiry, and such of Hume's essays, dissertations, and letters as might throw light on the problems in question, were again critically examined for such passages as might afford a solution of the questions to be answered. All passages to the purpose were then indexed with cross references to Hume's several writings which touched on the points in question. His inconsistencies were noted. The Humean literature was then combed and checked against this index, and passages adduced in support of any peculiar interpretation were placed in the context out of which they had been bodily lifted and the justice of the interpretation passed upon.

So much for the mechanics of the method here used. We shall now pass to what is possibly of more significance, viz., our canons of criticism and the biases and prejudices of the writer. But before we state our canons of criticism we wish to say a word or two regarding the possible alternatives of interpretation which the study revealed. The several alternatives, on analysis, reduced themselves to two: (i) that Hume had, at the time he composed the Treatise, reached abiding convictions regarding the moving principle of human nature, and regarding the genesis of belief, sympathy, and the moral judgment; and that he never meant to modify his position on these matters throughout all his other writings. The second (ii) alternative is that Hume never had any settled convictions even in the most fundamental principles, that when he came to write the second Enquiry he had definitely given up what is really Humean concerning the Treatise, viz., the moving principle and his account of the genesis of belief, sympathy, and

the moral judgment. On this latter alternative we have at least two if not three Humean philosophies to contend with, viz., the Treatise, the Enquiries, and the Cleanthean element in the Dialogues. Now we are not disposed to say that this is not a defensible alternative to take, but it has so many objectionable attendants that the philosophic prejudices of the writer lead him to embrace the former alternative, viz., that our author had certain fixed and abiding philosophical convictions which he retained throughout all his writings, and that these convictions, and what flows from them, constitute in essence the philosophy of David Hume.

On the second alternative it would be exceedingly difficult to give any connected and rational account of our author's philosophy. We should first have to teach the philosophy of the Treatise, then pass to the Enquiries, and we should be obliged to finish off with a good coating of orthodoxy as found in Cleanthes' theism or deism. It would be very disconcerting to have to present this development as a progress in thought. And what is most objectionable is that we should have no philosophy of David Hume but only a trail of vacillations, which, we could indeed call Humean philosophy, if we wished to refer to these fluctuations in the singular. We prefer a Hume that is consistent, be the price ever so heavy, to a Hume that never knows his own mind despite however wide a swath this latter Hume may cut. We shall now proceed upon this preference in setting up our canons.

We have already acknowledged the subjective character of all criticism. There is, however, an objective aspect to all such researches as we are now engaged in, viz., the meaning of words and sentences, which is the objective standard to which all criticism must refer. Many philosophers delight in covering up their difficulties by the use of meaningless terms, but this is scarcely true of Hume, who is, of all philosophic writers, the most careful in his use of terms and the significances he attaches to them. We shall here list our canons of criticism in the order of their importance.

First, as words are either denotative or connotative, the former indefinable the latter definable, it follows that after an author has stated how his terms relate to these two categories, and has defined those which belong to the latter class, it follows, unless otherwise explicitly stated, that his terms carry the significations acknowledged, and not some other. Words thus express definite meanings and sentences express definite thoughts. Apart from this canon, either implied or acknowledged, there can be no intelligible criticism, for otherwise we know not whether we are referring to the same things.

Second, where an inconsistency appears in the use of a term it shall be thrown out as not modifying the general and acknowledged signification which that term bears in the whole context of the work under survey. Few philosophers are so rigidly consistent throughout a whole treatise as never to relapse from their definitions. The Treatise took three years for its composition. During such a time an author may be subjected to many moods, conversations, and readings of variously persuasive effects which may possibly temporarily color his writing immediately thereafter. Passages inconsistent with the whole, which may arise from circumstances of this nature, are to be thrown out as not modifying the general tenor and internal consistency of the whole thought structure.

Third, where a philosopher has written more than one work on the same subject, that work is to be held to represent his views which is most in accordance with his acknowledged metaphysics and epistemology.

Fourth, where an author has written more than one work on metaphysics and epistemology, that work is to be held to represent his views on these matters which most adequately, fully, and scientifically treats of these problems.

Fifth, no passage is to be removed from its context for the support of an interpretation unless it carries within itself the sense of the context out of which it is torn. No passage is to be quoted in support of an interpretation contrary to canons IV and III when taken from contexts which fall under canon II.

Sixth, where there is a preponderance of philosophical opinion regarding the relation of one of two works to canon IV, this opinion constitutes a decision from which there can be no just appeal, except to personal prejudice. Regarding Hume's two metaphysical and epistemological treatises, viz., the Treatise and the Enquiries, the philosophical opinion in favor of the Treatise is practically unanimous. In fact, our researches have not revealed a single critic whose opinion favors the first Enquiry.

Seventh, where a philosopher advances opinions inconsistent with his avowed and acknowledged principles of metaphysics and epistemology, we may legitimately and justifiably assume that these opinions are either unavoidable concessions to public opinion, or else they are hasty and unguarded statements, which, on either alternative, are unworthy of dispute or the attempt to reconcile them with his general principles, and should hence be dismissed as if they had never been written.

These canons may be objected to because of their violating the historical approach so much approved by many critics, viz., that of considering the later of two works more representative of

the author's true position. This objection may be answered by pointing out that the whole world of philosophic opinion is practically unanimous in favor of Books I and II of the Treatise, which was the first work that Hume published.

If the objection be here raised that the canons are arbitrary, we should be pleased to have someone set forth another set of canons more appropriate to the subject matter. We see no way of orienting Hume's moral philosophy in his metaphysics and epistemology unless one decide in favor of either of two alternatives as set forth above (p. 9). If we were to decide in favor of alternative (ii), we can see no way of orienting Hume's moral teachings at all. Alternative (i) at least makes an orientation possible, as this performance undertakes to show. Since it is almost a commonplace in Humean exposition and criticism to say that his moral teachings are in no wise connected with his theoretical principles, we believe that such an orientation as this purports to be is much needed. Our author is constantly accused of all sorts of heretical practices, such as analyzing the self out of existence, denying that there can be any real change, denying that we know anything but our internal impressions, etc., for these reasons a thorough orientation of Hume's moral philosophy should be well received, especially since we shall attempt to show, successfully we hope, that he no wise merits the accusations levelled at him.

Now all canons such as we have set forth above are necessarily arbitrary, for apart from certain specifications and limitations there cannot arise anything wearing the character of agreements. This circumstance results from the relativity of all knowledge. But though these canons may be arbitrary in the sense of having been constructed for the specific purpose of solving certain difficulties connected with Hume's philosophy, we venture to affirm that these same difficulties will never be solved apart from a general agreement upon some such canons as have here been suggested.

If canon VII seem unduly arbitrary, we would have him who so feels consider whether there be any more appropriate perspective from which to judge the meaningfulness and seriousness of any thinker's opinions than that thinker's own avowed and acknowledged metaphysics and epistemology. If there be such a perspective we should be pleased to have it formulated and set forth. We feel, however, that there can be no appeal from the tribunal of a thinker's own metaphysics and epistemology regarding the meaningfulness of his own statements.

Before we are done with method it would seem in order to inform the reader regarding those personal biases and prejudices of the writer which are not circumscribable within any formulation

of method or acknowledgment of canons. Canons are arbitrary things, and however much we may wish to be impartial in their use, and thus gain objectivity, the impartiality is always qualified by our own affectional and temperamental structures within which our canons must necessarily function. As stated earlier, there is really no possible way of conveying to the reader the nakedness of one's feeling tone, upon which all fine discriminations ultimately rest. All that any writer seems able to do for his reader in this particular is to give expression to the more obvious manifestations of his intimate feeling-life. These we denominate biases or prejudices. The writer's more evident biases take the following forms: (i) he harbors the conviction that pleasure is the sole and only good; that the object of every moral judgment is some affection; that approval itself is an affection with other affections as its objects. From this it seems unavoidably to follow that virtue is a means to the realization of pleasure. (ii) He holds that knowledge consists in social agreement, and that apart from social agreement all is merely opinion. (iii) He understands the office of intelligence to consist in finding ways and means to the satisfaction of desire by virtue of its knowledge of causal laws or uniformities. (iv) He holds to the position of Hutcheson, Hume, Hartley, and Mill that there are qualitative distinctions within pleasure, and that pleasure to be moral must be approved. (v) He understands right to have two significations, viz., personal and social, the former resting upon the motive of the agent, the second resting upon the consequences of the act committed. (vi) He is a determinist and he understands the will to be the same with the last act of deliberation, which is equivalent to saying that the will is the strongest desire for the then present time.

The foregoing seems a fair and honest confession of philosophic prejudices, and it should afford the reader some insight into the manner in which the canons of criticism will be colored and shaded in their functioning. It is undeniably evident that any critic when on the verge of making very fine discriminations will be pulled over to that interpretation which is most favorable to his prejudices. To expect anything else is to expect the impossible. Any judgment is in the last analysis the judger's judgment and not the judgment of some disembodied impartial spectator. Any judgment of significance is in its issue a living thing, arising from the life-feeling of the judger. After its issue it may become thought and thus in a measure separated from its origin. It may then become an object of criticism either to the judger himself or to others. But no critic, not even he who gave birth to the judgment which is being criticized, seems competent to state the nature of its origin or determine the elements which

entered into its composition. Since this seems unavoidably so, all this passion for objectivity and impartial rationality would seem to be but a futile gesture. Let us keep this circumstance of human frailty in our eye during the progress of this study.

CHAPTER V
HUME'S THEORY OF THE IMAGINATION

SECTION I
The Significance of the Imagination

We have reserved for this chapter the more detailed discussion and criticism of memory, imagination, and reason, the three aspects of the human mind by which Hume attempts to account for all mental phenomena, as well as their object and subjective correlates. We have chosen to build this discussion and criticism on the imagination, and to compare and contrast memory and reason with it, precisely because the imagination is the all-important mental instrument in our author's philosophical reasonings.¹ This, we believe, has become sufficiently evident from what has already been said regarding his metaphysics and epistemology, and requires, therefore, little more emphasis to justify our attempting to collect from passages strung here and there throughout the Treatise, what is, by our interpretation, his theory of the imagination, and how it functions in the knowledge enterprise and in the business of living.

In Chapter III we discussed at some length, from such material and sources as are available, what may have been the problems which gave rise to the Treatise. We concluded by setting forth six factors which may have conduced to the eventuation in question. But in the actual composition of the Treatise it appears that these six factors became centered upon, or synthesized into, one problem, viz., how is experience constituted? And when this came to be an insoluble problem, the question took the form, how can an experience be constituted? The problems therefore were very much the same as those that Kant faced some forty years later.

¹Laird, 106, says, "Since for Hume all causal 'inferences,' 'reasonings,' 'proofs,' and 'probabilities' were associations, he ascribed them all to the 'imagination' which he regarded as the faculty that made every non-demonstrative 'transition.' When the mind felt necessitated and entirely convinced through repeated and uncontradicted former experience the imagination, so tutored, became identical with the (matter-of-fact) understanding."

Hume's relation to Hobbes, Locke, and Berkeley gave him an inheritance which came to be the source of many of his profoundest difficulties, viz., sensationism; and as he understood this doctrine, or at least, as he interpreted it in his own philosophy, the data of mind, the sense data -- sensations or impressions -- became with him actual data, whether interpreted as physical bits or psychic states. These sense data were held by him to be distinct and discrete units however much they might become involved in the complexities of composition; and their offspring, ideas, were also held to be simple in their nature, corresponding exactly to the impressions from which they were derived. The complex ideas he held to be but a collection of simple ideas related by the principles of the imagination, viz., resemblance, contiguity in time and place, and causation. He is carrying out consistently his principle that everything in nature is individual; and that whatever is individual is in some sense different, and whatever is different is distinguishable, and that whatever is distinguishable is separable by the thought and imagination.

This inheritance of sensationism with its consequent individualism, carried in its train a problem of the profoundest consequence and indissolubility, which stayed with Hume throughout his whole Treatise, and the consequence of which he finally confesses in the Appendix in terms almost of philosophic despair, viz., that,

"In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz., that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences."¹

The connection which we do think we perceive is not any real connection at all, but only a certain determination of the imagination to pass from one object to its usual attendant. This determination of the imagination, this habit or custom, is what we mistake for an actual and real connection between objects, which error reason points out by showing that our objects are but ideas, that come from wherever they may; if they come from without, then we know them without only as we know the ideas within, and the ideas within we know as separate and distinct entities, which are

¹Hume says in writing to Hutcheson, March 16, 1740, "I assure you, that without running any of the heights of scepticism, I am apt, in a cool hour, to suspect, in general, that most of my reasonings will be more useful by furnishing hints and exciting people's curiosity than as containing any principles that will augment the stock of knowledge that must pass to future ages" (L.I.39).

in no wise connected but only contiguous.

So reason in her final adjudication tears down to the ground the feigned fiction of necessity and objectivity which the imagination has so laboriously constructed. And yet, though reason may tear down, imagination builds again, and her architecture, though feigned and fictitious, does nevertheless serve fairly well for the business of action, which business is the end for which all knowledge is ultimately sought. We wish, therefore, to trace out the activity and functioning of this very faithful servant and instrument of man, viz., the imagination, which comes to man's support and succor when haughty and arrogant reason has deserted the ship of life in its direst need.

We shall then begin this account of the activity and functioning of the imagination by setting forth a few short passages, which may indicate the significance which Hume attributed to the imagination. "The imagination," is "the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy."¹ "According to my system, all reasonings are nothing but the effects of custom."² "The memory, sense, and understanding are... all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas."³ "Belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cognitive part of our natures."⁴ "Necessity... is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another."⁵ "Sympathy... is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of the imagination."⁶ And lastly, "The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can join, mix, and vary them in all the ways possible."⁷

These passages will serve to show what relation the imagination bears to the structure of the Treatise. The imagination is the instrument by means of which we are led to believe in the independent and continued existence of objects, and in a real connection between cause and effect. Hume contrasts the imagination, in several places, with memory, reason, understanding, custom, experience, and the passions. It may be well to bring these matters to a smaller compass to see wherein these various aspects of the mind differ.

SECTION II

The Imagination Contrasted with other Principles of the Mind

There are several passages in the Treatise wherein the

¹T. 225.

²T. 149.

³T. 265.

⁴T. 183.

⁵T. 165.

⁶T. 427.

⁷T. 629.

imagination seems to be used in somewhat different senses, and Hume became aware of this in reading over his manuscript, and inserted a foot-note which reads in part:

"When I oppose the imagination to the memory, I mean the faculty, by which we form our fainter ideas. When I oppose it to reason, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings. When I oppose it to neither, 'tis indifferent whether it be taken in the larger or more limited sense, or at least the context will sufficiently explain the meaning."¹

It may be well to see how it fares with these distinctions. We shall begin with the memory.

I

Let us get this matter before us clearly: an impression strikes the sense organs and is immediately conveyed to the receptive faculty and by its impact creates a disturbance which is felt. Other impressions follow and are likewise felt. On the reception of an impression, in its being felt, an impress or copy of it is taken, with its order and position, by the memory. The taking of the copy includes the taking of the feeling felt on its reception. We can, therefore, in referring to this perception, refer either to the representation or to the feeling. They are in a sense one. The copy taken is a simple idea of the memory. When we regard this idea by reason (which is the uniformities in experience come to consciousness) we regard it as an existent in its various relations; when however we regard this same idea from the point of view of the imagination as it concerns ourselves we are more particularly aware of its immediate relation to the feltness of which it (the objective existent) was the occasion. In this latter circumstance the category of pleasure and pain is functioning in conjunction with that of degree of quality; in the former case the categories of situations in time and place, and causation, are functioning. But even in the two cases here cited it is clearly evident that no sharp distinction can be drawn between the deliverances of reason and the activities of the imagination.

Impressions do not as a rule come in isolated singles, but in hordes, all of which may represent one single object. Here the activity of the imagination comes to the fore to give unity to this chaotic mass. The memory as such is passive. Impressions are simply registered upon it. When a horde of impressions appears, the imagination does not trouble itself to separate this mass into its original units, though Hume holds this to be possible. The

¹T. 118; cf. foot-note 371.

complexity of feltnesses is given a synthesis by the imagination and as such is registered on the memory as one idea, say of a house. This complex idea may, if necessary, be separated into its simple units by the imagination, though this capacity, it would seem, is more of a philosophical fiction than a reality. The individuals of nature are ultimate tangible and (or) colored points, which are supposed to answer to a simple impression and its consequent simple idea.

The simple or complex ideas as they are registered on the memory are in a sense imbedded in feeling. This accounts for their force and vivacity when viewed by the imagination. But they soon come to lose their original force and vivacity; they become fainter, weaker, and less encrusted with feeling, till by a gradual transition they become perfect ideas, and as such the imagination is at liberty to change and transpose its perfect ideas¹ as it sees fit.² But even after the ideas of memory have slipped over into the imagination, the memory still retains an impress of their order and position, so that the imagination is at liberty to refer back to this reference if in doubt as to the reality or fictitious nature of the ideas with which it is playing.

But we shall see that this distinction of Hume's between the ideas of memory as being forceful and vivacious, and of the imagination as being faint and weak, does not always hold. When our author comes to treat of the nature of belief, which he says is "an idea related to or associated with a present impression,"³ or "a lively idea produced by a relation to a present impression,"⁴ he finds instances which violate the distinction he drew in the opening pages of the *Treatise*.

"I think, I remember such an event, says one; but am not sure. A long tract of time has almost worn it out of my memory, and leaves me uncertain whether or not it be the offspring of my fancy."⁵

And he goes on to add:

"And as an idea of the memory, by losing its force and vivacity, may degenerate to such a degree, as to be taken for an idea of the imagination; so on the other hand an idea of the imagination may acquire such a force and vivacity, as to pass for an idea of the memory, and counterfeit its effects on the belief and judgment."⁶

How then are we to decide whether we are being duped by the imagination or whether we are actually believing in realities?

Hume has no hard and fast rule to offer for distinguishing

¹T. 8.

²T. 9.

³T. 93.

⁴T. 97.

⁵T. 85-6.

⁶T. 86.

between true and fictitious ideas. All that he has to offer on this head is the so often reiterated statement that an opinion

"or belief may be most accurately defined, 'A LIVELY IDEA RELATED TO OR ASSOCIATED WITH A PRESENT IMPRESSION.'"¹

As the present impression is always the presentation of reality, and if the lively idea be accurately related to or associated with this reality, it does not appear how there can arise an occasion for error.

Yet everyday experience informs us only too well that we constantly make errors of interpretation even on the occasion of present impressions. There can be no doubt regarding the reality of the present impressions if they come from the senses. The error can only arise from the way we relate or associate them. How this may come about is not easy to explain. The factors involved are resemblance, contiguity in time and place (which the memory takes care of by preserving the order and position of its impressions), and constant conjunction. Constant conjunction is but the recalled repetition of past instances which resemble the impression or impressions in question. The accuracy of this circumstance would rest on the faithfulness of the memory's preserving the real order and position of the impressions which make up the ideas constantly conjoined. This in turn depends on the consistent functioning of the category of situations in time and place. An error here would involve some defect or imperfection in the functioning of this category.²

Assuming, however, that the operation of the category of situations in time and place (which preserves in memory the order and position of perceptions) be consistent, we are left with the intuitive category of resemblance. This category intuitively likens and is that principle of the imagination by means of which it relates and associates similar objects. An error in relation or association can only result, therefore, from some defect or imperfection in the operation of this category.

Thus an error in the interpretation of presented sense data can result only from some defect or imperfection in the operation of the principles of the imagination.

"We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea: and this it may do after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea; or when it entirely loses that

¹T. 96.

²T. 9.

vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty, by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called MEMORY, and the other the IMAGINATION."¹

From this we gather that our author holds the ideas of memory to be in a manner half way between impressions and perfect ideas.

It may seem audacious to try to picture to ourselves what the memory is. We have been so often told that its "chief exercise... is not to preserve the simple ideas, but their order and position."² Yet it may assist the present enterprise of attempting to give an account of the imagination if we draw on analogies in making the memory vivid to us.

In our author's view the memory may be likened to a very fine grained, receptive, jelly-like, diaphanous plate whose one side lies against the naked, raw life-flow of the subject, and whose other side faces an amphi-theatre which is all a stage and peopled with perfect ideas, enclosed by a non-receptive, non-diaphanous covering, which, to the end opposite to the receptive place, terminates and is conjoined to a projective plate to whose off side are attached all the efferent nerves. Immediately in front and on both sides of the receptive plate are apertures in the walls of the amphi-theatre's covering whose openings, at a slant, face directly on the receptive plate. These apertures are the termini of the afferent nerves whose impulses (sense data) impinge and play upon the receptive plate.

We shall now substitute the word memory for the term "receptive plate," and we see that impressions strike upon it and in so doing are imbedded in its jelly-like texture. This striking causes an impress to be taken of the order and position of the impressions, which in a sense remains after the impressions have matured into perfect ideas and have slid off onto the stage. The ideas of memory are half-matured ideas which are in the process of becoming perfect ideas. Now the imagination is but a collective term indicating the functioning of the eight primitive categories. The stage is its arena. Upon it are played all the dramas of life. The characters of this stage are either professional actors or under-studies, perfect ideas or ideas of memory. The latter are more impulsive, less disciplined, less polished, more forceful and vivacious because they are yet anchored to the memory and still imbedded and enclosed about, in part at least, by the feeling disturbances which they created in striking upon the memory. The ideas of memory in becoming perfect ideas lose almost wholly their original feeling tone, retaining only their relational character, so that upon their entrance upon the stage they come "psychic states"

¹T. 8-9.

²T. 9.

or objects of the mind which exist and are yet nowhere. When Hume affirms "that an object may exist, and yet be nowhere,"¹ he is referring in part to these perceptions of the mind which he otherwise calls perfect ideas. He says,

"An object may be said to be nowhere, when its parts are not situated with respect to each other, as to form any figure or quantity.... Now this is evidently the case with all our perceptions and objects, except those of sight and feeling."²

He says that a sound or a smell cannot be of a circular or square figure, nor can a moral reflection be placed either on the right or the left side of a passion. Sounds really do seem to make volume and so do smells.³ Our author would, perhaps, have been more accurate if he had limited his use of the maxim, "that objects may exist, and yet be nowhere," to perfect ideas.

Another peculiarity of memory is that it appears to be continuously growing new layers of cells on the side facing the stage, so that as the impressions keep striking it, they always seem to strike a new surface, the earlier impressions being, in their order and position, further and further covered up or compressed together or worn down. It is here understood that when an idea of memory graduates to a perfect idea, its graduation consists in the abstraction of relation with an almost total elimination of feeling tone.

The perfect ideas are all related or associated on the stage in accordance with their several resemblances. All the ideas of the imagination which take their origin directly from impressions which strike upon the memory are all of them without exception, related with regard to identity; they all have existence in common. But these same ideas are variously related in accordance with their occurrence in time and place; from this together with a certain determination of the imagination arises the causal relation. Ideas are further associated according to their degrees of quality; they are also related according to size, and to number, if they occur not singly but in groups. The repetition of instances of constant conjunction has also to do with number, for the greater the number of instances the easier it is for the imagination to presume the existence of the absent object and to relate it as cause or effect to the present object, which ever the case may be.

Contrariety is the intuition of difference, dissimilarity; whereas resemblance is the intuition of likenesses, samenesses, similarities among ideas; but degrees of quality is the category which intuits to what extent two or more objects, impressions,

¹T. 235.

²T. 235-6.

³Cf. T. 231.

possess the same quality. It is upon this intuition that depends the relating of the present impression in its immediacy to like qualified objects of the memory which have been perceived prior in time. If there be no defect in the operation of this category, the relation established will be taken up by the imagination and associated with perfect ideas which possess the quality or qualities in question, and this final relating will determine what response the human mind makes to the stimulus (present impressions) in question.

The response will be determined in its rise by uniformities of experience already established (this is the same with reason or habit), and its expression will take the form of a habitual performance. Reason is nothing different, it would seem, from the uniformities of experience which have come to consciousness, which is the same with habit. When a stimulus appears for which no uniformities sufficient to release an immediate response can be found, it is not reason (habit) which solves the difficulty, but rather the imagination. This will be taken up a little later. In the foregoing we have contrasted the imagination with the memory; we shall now proceed to contrast the imagination with reason, comprehending under this head also the understanding.

II

Hume says that, "When I oppose," the imagination, "to reason, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings."¹ We may here very well ask, if we exclude from the imagination both demonstrative and probable reasonings, what remains? Demonstrative reasonings, as we have seen, have nothing to do with matters of fact, i.e., with ideas which take their origin from sense-impressions.

"I have observed," says Hume, "that geometry, or the art, by which we fix the proportions of figures; though it much excels, both in universality and exactness, the loose judgments of the senses and imagination; yet never attains a perfect precision and exactness. Its first principles are still drawn from the general appearance of objects; and that appearance can never afford us any security, when we examine the prodigious minuteness of which nature is susceptible.... There remain, therefore, algebra and arithmetic as the only sciences, in which we can carry on a chain of reasoning to any degree of intricacy, and yet preserve a perfect exactness and certainty."²

This results from our arbitrarily defining the unit of number, and

¹T. 118 footnote; cf. footnote 371.

²T. 70-1.

hence it, and all the classes which result from it, are in idea precisely and exactly the same. The relations between these constructed ideas are constant for all times and places, and they thus give us exactness.

When we come to probable reasonings we immediately see that we have here to do with perfect ideas which take their origin from sense-impressions. Whereas the ideas of demonstration are fictions, though exact, the ideas of probability are realities. The latter represent what was once present sense-impressions; the ideas of exact demonstration do not represent any once present sense-impressions, but are fictions constructed by the imagination. As they are constructed with great care and minuteness, they assist us in checking up the hasty judgments of the senses and imagination. But having abstracted the ideas of demonstration, and if we now remove the ideas which make up probable reasonings, what remains?

We have seen that the world of the imagination, the great arena where all the dramas of life are played, is peopled largely with ideas which make up probable reasonings. We observed that these ideas are related by the primitive categories of the mind in accordance with their several properties and relations in time and place. When, therefore, Hume contrasts the imagination with reason, he is excluding all the ideas so related. This, however, does not exclude all the data of the imagination. "The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can joint, and mix, and vary them in all the ways possible."¹ In short, the imagination can disregard the causal relations and transpose and change its ideas at will. When, therefore, Hume uses the word imagination as contrasted with reason, he means this creative capacity of the mind. This would be the world of art, of fiction, of mythology, of eschatology, of day dreaming, reveries, and dreams. Yet it is apparent even here that there is considerable borrowing from the world of probability. All fictions must bear some resemblance to what might occur, if things were just a little otherwise than they are.

We have observed that perfect ideas are ideas of the imagination which derive their origin from once present impressions of sense. We observed also that ideas of memory would be meaningless if they were not interpreted and accurately related to the perfect ideas of the imagination. Consider what has just been said with regard to Kant's dictum that concepts without percepts are empty,

¹T. 629. One is sometimes left with the suspicion that Hume uses the term "imagination" rather uncritically. He says that it does this and that in the sense of a "scapegoat" to cover up difficulties.

and percepts without concepts are blind, and we see that they regard this matter in much the same light. It matters little whether we speak of concepts, forms of the mind, or perfect ideas; or whether we speak impressions, sensations, percepts or ideas of memory, these terms all mean about the same, respectively.

There is one passage in the Treatise which bears a very close, if not identical, meaning to Kant's famous dictum just referred to. It is thus:

"Were there no mixture of any impression in our probable reasonings, the conclusion would be entirely chimerical: and were there no mixture of ideas, the actions of the mind, in observing the relation, would, properly speaking, be sensation, not reasoning."¹

And since we are drawing analogies between Hume and Kant, we might as well set forth one more, viz., regarding the sensible and intelligible worlds. There is of course nothing transcendental about Hume's world of judgment, yet he makes the distinction between the sensible and intelligible, and he does it in this fashion:

"Of these impressions or ideas of the memory we form a kind of system, comprehending whatever we remember to have been present, either to our internal perceptions or senses; and every particular of that system joined, to the present impression, we are pleased to call a reality. But the mind stops not there. For finding, that with this system of perceptions, there is another connected by custom, or if you will, by the relation of cause and effect, it proceeds to the consideration of their ideas; and as it feels that 'tis in a manner necessarily determined to view these particular ideas, and that the custom or relation, by which it is determined, admits not of the least change, it forms them into a new system, which it likewise dignifies with the title of realities. The first of these systems is the object of the memory and senses; the second of the judgment."²

When Hume is contrasting the imagination with neither the memory nor reason, but is using it in the wider sense indifferent to either, he then refers to the imagination as the "principle which peoples the world, and brings us acquainted with such existences, as by their removal in time and place lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory. By means of it I paint the universe in my imagination, and fix my attention of any part of it I please."³ Thus from our readings of history and conversations with travellers we form ideas of distant lands and cities which we have never seen,

¹T. 89.

²T. 108.

³T. 108.

and of cultures and peoples and cities remote in time of which our senses and memory could in no manner reach. We may form the idea of Rome and place it on the idea of an object which we call the globe, and we may then form some idea of forms of government, religion, and custom in the time of Augustus. All these constructions of the imagination are nothing but ideas which we form to ourself; and everything else which we may believe is nothing but an idea enlivened by a present impression or an impression of reflection occasioned by an idea of memory. The use of the imagination in the reconstruction of past events rests upon custom and the relation of cause and effect, and this species of imagination distinguishes itself from that which is merely the offspring of our fancy by its ideas being more lively and vivacious, and ordered with regard to time and place.

The mere offsprings of fancy (the use of the imagination in the creation of fictions) distinguish themselves from real ideas and ideas of historical reconstruction, in that the former wear a mantle of sheer vagueness, have no settled position or order, and tend to fade out of mind very easily. Since Hume has defined belief as a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression or the impression of an idea of memory, there can be no exact standard by which we can know whether we are being duped or not. If we are, then this flows from some defect or imperfection in the functioning of our categories of relation. But in general we may take it as a rule that if we have a lively idea, that idea is lively because it is accurately related to an impression of some sort, from whence it derives its liveliness. For our author "would willingly establish it as a general maxim in the science of human nature, that when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity."¹

David Hartley's associational psychology differs somewhat from Hume's in that the former denies that we have any impressions of reflection. Hartley begins with simple vibrations, which by being often repeated beget vestiges, miniatures, viz., vibratiuncles, which in their turn give rise to simple ideas. Simple vibratiuncles run into complex ones by means of association. He then observes that "Simple ideas will run into complex ones, by means of association."² And hence,

"When simple ideas run into a complex one, according to the

¹T. 98.

²David Hartley, Observations on Man, prop. xii, p. 46, (ed. 6).

foregoing proposition, we are to suppose, that the simple miniature vibrations corresponding to these ideas, run in like manner, into complex miniature vibrations, correspondent to the resulting complex idea."¹

And from thence he is led to believe that,

"It is reasonable to think, that some of the complex vibrations attending complex ideas, according to the last proposition, may be as vivid as any of the sensory vibrations excited by the direct action of objects."²

Thus Hume and Hartley agree that an idea simple or complex may take on the vivacity of an impression by means of association, and it is by this means precisely that the subject is persuaded in the reality of an idea, viz., by its vivacity, by its being felt as real, and hence belief or assent to any idea rests upon feeling rather than reason.

We may conclude this contrast of the imagination with reason by attempting to formulate what kind of an entity reason is. All our observations so far seem to indicate that reason with Hume is but the higher and more refined and staid aspects of the imagination. It is evident that the machinery which gives rise to exact demonstration, viz., ideas which admit of constant relations, is the work of the imagination. The eight primitive categories are the means by which all the interpretations of mind take their rise. Reason seems to be but habit more firmly set and fixed. What seems to be excluded when we say that reason is habit is the principle of contradiction. Habit leads us to believe in the causal relation between objects, and also in the independent and continued existence of objects, but reason points out that a thing cannot be both continuous and interrupted (as our perceptions are) at one and the same time; nor can we say that objects themselves are connected since all we know regarding them are our ideas which only appear contiguous, never connected.

Reason points out that we know objects only as ideas within, and whatever may be their nature without, we know them without only as they are present within, and as they are present within, they are conjoined, contiguous, but not necessarily nor in any other manner actually connected. Thus contrariety or the principle of contradiction tears down the whole causal structure which the imagination has fashioned. The senses, memory, and imagination build up a causal world which serves the daily needs of life, yet reason tears it down as a fiction. If we take sides with the imagination,

"and condemn all refined reasoning, we run into most manifest absurdities. If we reject it in favour of these reasonings,

¹Ibid., prop. xlii, p. 50.

²Ibid., prop. xiv, p. 51.

we subvert entirely the human understanding. We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all."¹

These are some of the problems which Hume has on his hands when he comes to the end of Book I of the Treatise. At the conclusion of this chapter we suggest means by which our author might have obviated some of the difficulties. We shall now relate the imagination to the passions.

III

We have observed in the present study of the imagination that reason, with Hume, in its most common and everyday expression is the same with habit. Reason is the coming to consciousness of uniformities in experience. Uniformities are but related instances which have properties in common. This relating is done by the imagination. The real ideas so related make up our knowledge of proofs and probability. When an instance in experience is seen to fall under one of our uniformities it is immediately related to it, and life moves on smoothly and habitually. Though this is called habitual action, the mental operations involved are exceedingly complicated, for they involve the whole relational machinery of the mind. And though these operations are largely unconscious, this in no wise lessens their significance. A habitual action certainly appears to the actor as a reasonable action, and its reasonableness consists in the mental processes which underlie it. When we say, therefore, that reason is the same with habit, we are saying what nearly everyone evidences in his actions and general manner of living. What seems excluded from reason in this interpretation is the principle of contradiction; and this indeed is a mighty exclusion. This principle, so far as we can see, has very little to do with habit. By its means we detect inconsistencies in our habits as related to a given goal. Yet, the detection of inconsistencies in our thought and actions becomes almost a habit with us in the process of our education.

As the chief exercise of reason, habit, or custom is to relate and thus interpret instances in experience which fall under established uniformities, functioning on the arena of the imagination, so the chief function and exercise of the imagination as related to the passions is to generate sympathy. This is done by the conversion of an idea into an impression. The explanation of the mechanism of this conversion will occupy us during the rest of this sub-section.

Our author observes that

"Nothing is more curiously enquired after by the mind of man, than the causes of every phenomenon: nor are we content with knowing the immediate causes, but push our enquiries, till we arrive at the original and ultimate principle."¹

Hume has made himself abundantly clear what this principle is regarding that which moves us to action.

"There is implanted in the human mind a perception of pain and pleasure, as the chief spring and moving principle of its actions.... Impressions always actuate the soul, and that in the highest degree; but 'tis not every idea which has the same effect."²

Another passage pregnant with significance regarding the moving principle in man is the following:

"I feel an ambition to rise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy."³

These passages should make it fairly evident that Hume considered pleasure and pain the moving principle of all our actions. If pleasure and pain be the moving principle of all our actions, and if what we are moved to is to avoid pain or to reinstate pleasure, then it seems to follow inexorably that pleasure is the good, and the sole and only good, and pain evil. We shall examine this more at large when we come to treat of the constitution of the good in Part II, Chapter VII.

Hume nowhere, in any one place, gives a minute account of how an idea is converted into an impression in the generation of sympathy. This mechanism has to be gathered by implication from his theory regarding the origin and nature of ideas, and from stray allusions spread out here and there throughout the entire

¹T.266

²T. 118. In the second Enquiry Hume seems to find many instances of actions which take their origin from a consideration of usefulness as not related to self but to others, viz., humanity or fellow feeling, or sympathy. In a foot-note he adds, "It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or fellow feeling for others. It is sufficient, that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes." (pp. 219-20.) This certainly is not the spirit of the Treatise, where causes are enquired after to their last root.

³T. 271.

Treatise. Let us therefore assume such a situation as would naturally give rise to sympathy through the conversion of an idea into an impression, and let us then examine minutely the probable mechanism involved in the conversion.

We assume a situation because in no other manner can an idea be converted into an impression. The discussion of sympathy in general, in the abstract, apart from any situation carries with it no intelligibility. If this seem a severe criticism of many moralists, then let us only reflect that belief or assent arises from a lively idea being related to or associated with a present impression or an impression of memory. Impressions arise only from situations, so that when moralists presume to discuss sympathy in general as abstracted from every once present situation, they are but dealing in meaningless jargon, which may indeed affirm that sympathy is an inherent and original principle in human nature, in no manner derived from impressions and their consequent pleasures and pains as related to self. But we may observe that of late moralists have become less prone to such wholesale and sweeping affirmations, and this caution we attribute to their growing consciousness that the moral sciences (social sciences) advance only insofar as they make experiments, or study situations.

We are often assured by our author that sympathy is the conversion of an idea into an impression; that this generation of sympathy comes about most readily from a study of the causes or effects of passions in others; that from the countenance and expression of the face we are led to infer a motive, a passion; that we are led to check up on this inference by enquiring after the cause which excites the passion whose manifestation we behold; and that also from the study of exciting objects (causes) we are led to anticipate passions in those who may be affected by them in a measure appropriate to these objects.¹ And though we do not wish to anticipate what is to be the subject matter of Chapter VI, viz., the problem of sympathy in Hume, we propose, nevertheless, to give here a brief account of the mechanism connected with the generation of sympathy and its relation to the imagination.

In hunting around for a situation which would give rise to sympathy or approval we decided it would be of some moment to consult the situations which Hume sets forth in the second Enquiry (sec. v. pt. 1, on "Why Utility Pleases") as indubitable evidence of a disinterested benevolent principle in man, wholly dissociated

¹We refer the reader to the following passages, among many others, where Hume touches on the generation of sympathy: T. 354, 362-3, 364-5, 367f, 385-7, 427, 675, 579, 589, 603.

from any concern whatever for self. We shall set forth three of the situations adduced, and then we shall select one of them and account for the sympathy displayed in terms of the Treatise. If this endeavor be successful, we may legitimately say that in the Enquiry Hume is not so much concerned with the interpretation of abstruse causes (which is the business of philosophers) as with painting the character and nobility of virtue on the basis of utility, and with the writing of prose (which is the business of the artist and literatus).

1. "We frequently bestow praise on virtuous actions, performed in very distant ages and remote countries; where the utmost subtilty of imagination would not discover any appearance of self-interest, or find any connexion of our present happiness and security with events so widely separated from us.

2. "A generous, a brave, a noble deed, performed by an adversary, commands our approbation; while in its consequences it may be acknowledged prejudicial to our particular interest."¹

3. "Frame the model of a praiseworthy character, consisting of all the most amiable moral virtues: give instances, in which these display themselves after an eminent and extraordinary manner: you readily engage the esteem and approbation of all your audience, who never so much as enquire in what age and country the person lived, who possessed these noble qualities: a circumstance, however, of all others, the most material to self-love, or a concern for our own individual happiness."²

Since this last is the most material evidence against the self-interest theory, and an indubitable argument for there being an inherent and original and underived principle of sympathy in human nature, we shall select it as our situation, and shall attempt to give an account of how this sympathy or approval is generated, or derived from the more simple elements of memory impressions and pleasure and pain.

Mr. Smith is the speaker while Mr. Doe represents the audience. Mr. Smith is an accomplished artist in painting the character and beauty of virtuous actions, while Mr. Doe has a fair equipment of ideas and their prior impressions with their concomitant feeling elements. Mr. Smith begins to build up the picture of the person in question. He cites the many noble deeds he did, the many kindnesses he performed, the amiability of his wit and humor, giving instances of all these, together with a description of his elevated sense of justice as displayed in instances

¹E. 215-6.

²E. 216, italics ours.

given.

During this performance Mr. Doe sits in his seat while the vocal symbols which represent the ideas (moral qualities in question) keep pouring in upon his ears. The real person in question is, of course, not present to him, nor are the actions which he is said to have performed. All that become present to him are ideas; and the ideas which Mr. Smith is trying to put across will only be received by Mr. Doe insofar as he has had prior experiences of a like nature. But assuming that Mr. Doe has experienced at one time or another all the moral qualities involved in the discussion, it follows that he will have some understanding of what Mr. Smith is talking about.

Let us now take it for granted that Mr. Smith did not relate anything concerning his hero which is not commonly approved of in the group in which Mr. Doe was reared and in which he now lives. We need, therefore, only take one instance of the hero's virtuous deeds, in our account of the approval in question, for all the rest will be approved in a similar fashion.

Let us assume that our hero is a Prince of much wealth, territory, influence, and command; one who had fought many wars in the defense of his people, and who had performed as many deeds of unprecedented valor. Give him a great city where he is master, much outlying territory from which to feed his people. Let us assume further that he has just recently won a great victory in war, in which enterprise he had to draw rather heavily upon his agricultural male subjects. Let now some trusted servant of the Prince inform him that thirty years earlier, when he succeeded to the crown, there lived in his outlying district of Pram a farmer, his wife and six sons, the oldest then ten. Let him then be told that during the several campaigns, beginning shortly after his accession, he had first called on the father to serve, and he had been killed, leaving the mother with her group of boys. In the years that had followed he had called for the boys as they grew to manhood, and the mother had had the great misfortune never to see one of her off-spring return. Let him then be told that prior to his last great victory, the mother had remaining of her original brood only her youngest son, who was then thirty, and not married. Let him then be told that his officers committed the blunder of commanding this last son under the recent conscription, and that during the campaign, he also had been killed, leaving the bereaved mother to eke out her remaining years in solitude and sorrow, with no support.

Let now the magnanimity of the Prince rise to the occasion. Let him enter into the solitude and sorrow and misery of the mother. Let him be moved with compassion for so great a misfortune as has

befallen the mother; let him be moved to recognize publicly the gifts and sacrifices of the mother to the State; let him award her a pension and all the conveniences of life. To have done this is about as much as remained within his power, since the dead cannot be resurrected.

During this sad tale of sorrow and magnanimity Mr. Doe has had revived within him many past experiences of death. He has thought of his own three sons, his wife, the horrors of war, of death, of solitude, of a mother's loneliness and bereavement in being robbed of all her off-spring and her man. He receives, of course, no present impressions of the actual characters in question. The Prince, the father, the mother, the sons, the situation, all the actions are feigned characters, situation, and deeds. His imagination comes here to the fore, and with its command over all its ideas, it constructs, creates these ideas to represent the meanings conveyed in the vocal symbols employed by Mr. Smith. As these ideas are set up by the imagination they are immediately related to similar actual ideas which Mr. Doe may have had in his mind, as derived from once present sense-impressions. These creations of the imagination by being so related revive the ideas of memory, causing them to give off impressions, which in their turn become or are passions similar to those once experienced by Mr. Doe. His idea of the mother is one of bereavement, solitude, and misery. This idea sets off memory impressions of grief, of misery, of solitude, all of which are painful as related to himself. But the imagination does not stop here; if it did Mr. Doe would leave the room. The memory impressions of pain run up to the created idea of the mother and enliven it with a feigned reality which gives it objective status in some prior time and place. The basis of this feigned objectivity is the faith or belief we repose in the characters of historians. Now it seems plainly evident here that Mr. Doe does not feel her pain, but only his own, and only by a transposition of himself into her situation, by viewing to himself the objects which excited her passions.

He constructs ideas of the causes which played upon her and presents these to himself, and in this wise only can he enter into her emotional experiences. These ideas which he constructs of exciting objects (causes), set off memory impressions of such objects once present to his experience. These in turn enliven his ideas of the exciting objects and thus he creates the situation in which she stood. And thus by a transposition of the imagination he in a sense places himself in her shoes and attempts by this means to make present to himself what probably were her emotions. And knowing that were he actually in her situation he should wish to relieve his uneasiness, and from the resemblance

in human nature he forms to himself the idea that she would wish the same. Having formed this idea, we may now ask, what would move him to assist her out of her difficulties?

The answer Hume gives is sympathy, i.e., sympathy with her emotional state which Mr. Doe has pictured to himself through transposition. But it is evident that he would feel so moved only so long as he feels himself so transposed, for the transposition gives color and life to his idea of her emotion. After he has taken his imagination off the objects which excite her, it is evident that he should no longer feel much sympathy with her plight.

We never feel anything but our own ideas, and thus to feel the passion of another, we must make what we take to be his passions our own. Having done this we may enter into his life, but not before, nor in any other manner.

Mr. Doe's approval of the Prince's actions flows from a similar transposition of situation. In his derived sympathetic state Mr. Doe feels a desire to relieve the distress of the mother. This desire we call humanity, benevolence, or sympathy. These words indicate passions generated by the imagination's taking an idea of memory pried lose by being related to a created idea of the imagination, and reflecting it back upon the subject's feeling life, or what we called earlier the receptive plate. This reflection gives rise to impressions which in their feeling expression we call passions. Such a passion is sympathy. Sympathy may also be reflected upon as an idea of reflection, and when we do this we tend to survey the effects which would result from its free expression. If the feeling which arises from this reflection be agreeable we call this act of the mind approval, if not, then disapproval. Thus when Mr. Doe approves of the actions of the Prince, he does so approve only because he should himself have acted in a similar manner under the same circumstances.

We have thus taken for reduction what Hume put forth in the Enquiry as the most indubitable instance of spontaneous undervived sympathy, and we have given an account of the generation of this passion in terms of the imagination's creative capacity, its relational qualities, the memory, impressions of reflection, and pleasure and pain. This may seem very complicated machinery to account for so evident a thing as a fellow-feeling with the members of our species, yet sympathy is not a simple thing; it is on the contrary one of the most difficult phenomena of the human mind to account for. This will become sufficiently evident when we come to grapple with the problem of sympathy in earnest, as we shall in the next chapter.

What we have said here on this head may be sufficient to indicate the relation of the imagination to the passions, which

was all we set out to do. There are two very marked aspects of the imagination, viz.: (i) as it regards our ideas derived directly from sense-impressions; and (ii) as it regards our ideas derived from impressions of reflection. The former concerns objects of the external world, the second our passions, the internal world. Directly between these two worlds, viz., reason and the passions, is a film which connects them, the category of pleasure and pain, which takes its first rise and operation when the first sense-impression makes its entrance into the soul, and from thence in a manner absorbs into itself every original feeling which takes its rise from sense-impression. It was the lack of this category which gave Kant all his difficulties in connecting his two worlds. His schematism was but the attempt to bridge an infinite gap by successive layers of padding, all of which was fruitless because his forms of the understanding were in no manner contaminated by taking their origin from sense, and sense is originally, and ever after, feeling. We shall now turn to the functional aspect of the imagination in the knowledge enterprise.

SECTION III

The Function of the Imagination in Hume's Epistemology

The foregoing discussion of our author's theory of the imagination has of course dealt all along with the imagination's function in the knowledge enterprise, yet it might be well to bring this rather lengthy interpretation to a smaller compass in order to comprehend the more significant points with greater clearness.

Let us then begin with the observation that sense data, with Hume, are not dead, inert, lifeless things, but should rather be characterized as living, energetic, creative things, which, on their entrance into the soul, connect with life and give rise to a feeling. This feeling is the effect of a contact of some sort, however inexplicable this contact may be. Hume sets forth constant conjunction in time and place, together with the imagination's determination to pass from one to the other of two objects so related, as his explanation of what is commonly understood as necessary connection. It appears nowhere evident to us how there can be an effect almost totally different from its cause. If sense data be characterized as lifeless, inert, dead things, how can they give rise to a feeling whose chief character is life? Hume's impressions of sense are creative. They give rise to emotional disturbances which are the chief spring and moving principle of all our actions. If, therefore, sense data are creative upon contact with life, it appears no wise evident how this could

possibly come about unless these same sense data contain some form of animation, life, or feeling as their essential quality independent of a relation to a human subject. We of course know them only as so related, and as so related they are indubitably felt as creative, modifying, energizing, and life-giving individualities of nature.

Though Hume does not enter into the above consideration of the nature of sense data or impressions, what we have said on this head is implied in his theory of the origin of ideas. We become aware of a stimulus as the result of a feeling, which is an effect of which the cause is a sense datum. Sometimes our author practically identifies sense-impressions with original pleasures and pains.¹ But as he is not concerned with the ultimate nature of things he did not choose to enter upon an enquiry as to the ultimate nature of sense data except insofar as to state that from the point of view of the understanding they come to be regarded as identities, i.e., objective existences, whereas from that of the passions they are regarded as feelings.

The chief exercise and function of the imagination may be summarily stated as that faculty of the mind whereby we are enabled to form beliefs, (i) in the independent and continued existence of objects; and (ii) in causation. The manner in which these beliefs arise has already been explained. Belief in objectivity arises from the coherence and constancy of certain of our impressions; whereas our belief in causation arises from the co-operation of four essential factors: (i) identities, (ii) succession, or the relation of identities in time, (iii) constant conjunction, or the relation of identities in place, and (iv) necessary connection.

Constant conjunction is but the repetition of similar instances which repetition can never give rise to any original impression or idea.² The senses give us no impression of necessary connection, nor does reason, for if it did, the impression would have to arise from reflection. We have no impressions of reflection which have any concern with the present business of accounting for necessary connection. Hume reduces his long examination of causation to this summary:

"The idea of necessity must arise from some impression. There is no impression conveyed by our senses, which can give rise to the idea. It must, therefore, be derived from some internal impression, or impression of reflection. There is no internal impression, which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. This therefore is the

¹Cf. T. 1, 190, 276. 324.

²T. 163-4.

essence of necessity. Upon the whole, necessity is something, that exists in the mind, not in objects, nor is it possible for us ever to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality of bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is nothing but that determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects or from effects to causes, according to their experienced relation.... The efficacy of causes is neither placed in the causes themselves, nor in the deity, nor in the concurrence of these two principles; but belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances. 'Tis here that the real power of causes is placed, along with their connexion and necessity."¹

Though this passage may seem very subjective and sceptical regarding true causal relations between objects, as well as regarding the independent and continued existence of objects, we are not led by this circumstance to doubt Hume's practical belief in these realities as objective. Hume is doubting our capacities to demonstrate the objective status of these realities. He is concerned with showing that these matters fall to the realm of sense-experience and hence to the realm of probability. Demonstrations have nothing to do with matters of fact.

Regarding our author's practical belief in the objectivity of the causal relation and of bodies, W. C. Gore says,

"Hume never doubts the reality of causation or of objectivity. as I understand him, but is concerned solely in accounting for the way in which we come to have believable ideas of such realities."²

C. W. Hendel, Jr., comes to a similar conclusion in interpreting Hume as affirming

"most emphatically, that there are true causes, and real objects, and persons, and he even allows, with much less assurance, indeed, the reality of God."³

In concluding this chapter we desire to offer a few observations the taking into account of which might possibly have

¹T. 164-5.

²The Imagination in Spinoza and Hume, p. 41, Chicago, U. of C. Press, 1902 (U. of C. Contributions to Philosophy, vol. II, No. 4). This work is a very valuable comparative study of the imagination in Spinoza and Hume. Our conclusions accord on the whole with Mr. Gore's findings.

³Studies in the Philosophy of David Hume, p. 416. Mr. Hendel has drawn conclusions regarding Hume's religious views with which we find ourself obliged to disagree. See Chapter X of this study (the complete dissertation in the University of Chicago Libraries).

freed our author from some of the problems which he had on his hands at the end of Book I, and in the Appendix.

SECTION IV Criticism

Let us therefore begin by begging the reader to indulge in a tolerant attitude towards what may appear as dogmatism when not substantiated by lengthy argument. We are not engaged in writing a system of philosophy but rather in considering what may be the proper conditions from which a system of philosophy might take its rise. By philosophy we comprehend every possible matter which may be, in any manner, circumstance, or situation, remote or now present, connected with an understanding of the enterprise of living. What is not so connected concerns neither philosophy nor any other interest of life. Philosophy may also be defined very adequately as the study of happiness.

We submit as our first observation that every system of philosophy, with which we have any acquaintance, sets out from conditions which later involve it in endless contradictions. We submit that the reason of this is that improper conditions are imposed and wrong question proposed. The first question of metaphysics is not, what is the nature of Being? or what constitutes Wisdom? (Aristotle,) or, how does knowledge reach its object? (Kant,) or, is the world one or many? (Hume.) All these questions are tremendously important, but no one of them is the primary question of philosophy.

In order to get a perspective from which we absolutely cannot be shaken, we must cut deeper than has so far been done in philosophy. We might venture on the philosophic enterprise by making a preliminary survey of all the known characters of things animate and inanimate; and we might be led to reduce all these to passivity and activity, the two irreducible qualities of everything that is, viz., space and change (in matter).¹ As we are parts of nature and participate in this activity, it follows that the most constant character of man, as well as of everything else that appears to the senses and is, is activity. What has not appeared to the senses of some one, either directly or by implication through our knowledge of causality, cannot possibly be a concern to the enterprise of living.

Having thus in our preliminary survey reduced all the known qualities of everything that has ever been to the senses,

¹See Ency. Brit. ed. 14, article "Ether" as related to Physics.

either directly or by implication, to activity, we might then proceed to raise the first question of philosophy, viz., what is the object of activity? If activity were reducible to something else it would be futile to raise the question we have proposed, for we should then have on our hands characters which would not be intelligible from our ground of reference. It is absolutely futile to ask what matter, or life, or space, or time, or activity is in itself. We know matter only by its qualities which appear to our senses. We know space only as it is gotten at by indirection as the medium in which change occurs. And as activity is absolutely ultimate we cannot define it in terms of something wider; we can only point to it and invite ourself and others to behold it.

Now having found our irreducible ground of reference, viz., activity, we ask, what is the object of activity? Activity in animate beings, and particularly in man, is intelligible only as it flows from some known cause or is directed at some anticipated end. Activity as it is caught in between these two points, but dissociated from them is completely and wholly unintelligible. Any activity, therefore, to be intelligible must take its origin from known causes or must be directed to anticipated ends. When either one of these points is given we can usually infer the absent one. To the question then, what is the object of activity? we answer, not objects physical, for the question remains, why are actions directed at them? nor yet truth, nor goodness, for the same question arises, why are they sought? The object of all activity, without exception, is some anticipated state of the subject (see below p.114).¹ We beg the reader to be patient here, for by "the subject" we mean to comprehend the good of others as this is seen by the subject.

In order to interpret the enterprise of living we needs must be permitted to speak of unitary actions. Actions which take their rise from a felt need and terminate sooner or later in an adjustment are considered as unitary actions or acts. Actions which take their rise from like needs and terminate in like adjustments tend by their repetition to become so habitual as scarcely to give consciousness to the anticipation. Every action must needs take its rise from some need either explicitly felt or implicitly proceeded upon by force of habit.

As all activity in the universe is totally and absolutely

¹Laird, 219, says, "Hume held, indeed, that what we approve was pleasure (our own or others', immediate or deferred)." Cf. Ibid., 191-2, 203-4.

meaningless except as it enters into the consciousness of man, we can hence limit philosophy to such activity as modifies man's conduct. To the first question, therefore, of philosophy, viz., what is the object of activity? (i.e., man's activity) we answer, either the anticipated reinstatement of pleasure or the anticipated avoidance of pain, which reduce themselves to one another.¹ This is the end as well as the beginning of all activity; and it, viz., pleasure and pain, is the first category of philosophy, apart from which every action of the human mind and body is unintelligible. We have said that everything that is in any manner knowable reduces itself to some species of activity, and this includes our wishing, desiring, willing, perceiving, imagining, reasoning, and, in short, everything that can in any way come within the ken of our consciousness. The lowest form of awareness and the highest reaches of mathematical reasoning are equally species of activity.

Hume was conscious of the significance of activity and its object, pleasure and pain, though he did not make full and adequate use of it in his philosophy. He says,

"There is implanted in the human mind a perception of pain and pleasure, as the chief spring and moving principle of all its actions."²

And again,

"The chief spring and actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are removed, both from our thought and feeling, we are, in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition."³

At the end of Book I when our author has gone through all the gamut of sceptical arguments and has reduced our state to a choice between a false reason or none at all, he nevertheless justifies his position, his pursuit of philosophy, his concern for analysis, argument, and philosophic invention, in preference to any other activity, on the ground that

"should I endeavor to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy."⁴

The employment of the category of pleasure and pain runs throughout the Treatise, but its adequate functioning is cramped and restrained by Hume's making agreement of our ideas the ultimate test of truth. Our author's ideal seems to have been to equip human nature, or man we should say, with a complete set of ideas private to himself, and then we are left with the suspicion

¹We grant freely that we pursue physical objects and social objects but we do so only as means to desirable states of consciousness. ²T. 118. ³T. 574. ⁴T. 271.

that our ingenious inventor has omitted to provide for his fully ideated man a world in which to act. Hume appears to have attempted to state the conditions under which experience arises in terms of knowledge, whereas his first principle of activity is pleasure and pain, and hence, knowledge has no meaning, no significance, except as related to, subsumed under, and defined in, terms of pleasure and pain. He should, therefore, have stated the conditions under which experience arises in terms of activity, and activity in terms of pleasure and pain; and he should then have made the success of activity, the fulfillment of anticipation, the test of truth.

As to his world of ideas, he could have done either of two things: (i) he could have retained his world of ideas by equating it fully with impressions (objects) as felt, and as they were felt they would define conduct; here truth would not consist in the agreement of ideas in a presumably inactive mental world, but rather in the agreement of anticipation with results in activity.¹ Or, (ii) he could have thrown overboard the whole gamut of ideas and taken in their place a world of objects in experience, which objects are in experience precisely as they are known, though this knowing need not be taken as exhausting the objects. Here objects would define conduct in accordance with their power of provoking pleasure and pain; and truth would thus consist in the success with which activity anticipated this power in objects. Either alternative would involve a complete nominalism, with the latter involving the further consideration of a behavioristic account of symbolism.

As to the question of the one and the many: on the former view, retaining his world of ideas, Hume could have taken the position that the world is but two in kind, viz., (i) space the medium, the arena of activity, one and continuous; and (ii) matter the mediated, one in quality characterized as animated and tangible, but discontinuous, its parts giving rise to all sense data as a result of their changing position in the medium. On the second view he could have disowned any concern with the one and the many,

¹If the question arise, is anticipation solely of pleasure or pain? we answer in the negative. But our anticipation of objects reduces itself on analysis to an implied or unconscious anticipation of desirable states of consciousness. Cf. Bishop Berkeley, Selections, p. 42 (Scribners), where he says that "We regard the objects that environ us in proportion as they are adapted to benefit or injure our own bodies, and thereby produce in our minds the sensations of pleasure or pain" (from Essay).

the origin of sensation, and the contradictions of reason, by just accepting sensations as they come and having them define problems as they arise in experience. Here imagination is mind while reason is habit.

Hume derives reason from the memory and imagination. She is the polished product of experience, the crystallized uniformities of experience come to consciousness. The memory and imagination gave her birth, nursed her. The imagination taught her everything she ever knew; taught her all the relations between things, which came before and which after, as well as how all things stood in place. She seems on her own biographer's account to have been born passive, and thus all relations had to be poured into her; she had no means of helping herself, being incapable of any motion or in any way initiating anything; and yet, after all these admissions of creative incapacities, after admitting that she can know nothing but what her parents had taught her, her biographer, nevertheless, permits her to stand arbiter and judge upon the work and the veracity of her parents. This injustice we should avoid were we to rewrite this biography.

It certainly seems on the face of this that Hume had something in reason never derived either from the memory or the imagination. Whether this additional something be the principle of contradiction or not we do not feel fully competent to say. We do not wish to accuse our author of harboring innate ideas, for he disowns any such proclivity. But when reason is made to sit as judge upon the labors of the imagination, causing an irreparable breach between them, we tend to become suspicious of the antecedents of the judge.

Yet such speculations get us nowhere. Let us own that Hume gave us an account of an imagination which synthesizes and makes whole what in its origin is discrete; that joins together by an indomitable determination what otherwise seems hopelessly disconnected; that comes to man's aid and succor when reason is dead and inert; that makes it possible for us to enter into the life and emotions of the members of our species. Indeed, he gave us an imagination that is prodigal with progress; that is laden with hope; that looks back into antiquity, if need be, in search of materials with which to build a more prodigious future. We may say, further, that he gave us a description of an instrument with which mankind might pry loose all the shackles and anchors which weigh down the adventurous spirit of man. Let us not, therefore, quarrel with Hume regarding what foundation he gave to reason. She is, when all is said and done, a slave of the passions; her office seems to be to do what she has been told, and when not told, to do what she has done before. She is hence very

conservative and adventures nowhere off the established uniformities over which she presides. She is habit wearing a mantle of respectability contributed by prior successes and sanctioned by time.

PART II
HUME'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER VI
THE PROBLEM OF SYMPATHY

SECTION I
The Problem Defined

Hume has left us his more important contributions to philosophy in two forms: (1) the Treatise of Human Nature, Books I and II of which were published in 1739, treating of the understanding and passions, respectfully, while Book III on morals appeared a year later, 1740. These three books constitute a connected whole, written successively in one endeavor of composition. There is a unity about them which argues that much labor was spent in organizing the material which forms their content. Book I treats of the foundation of philosophy, the elements of knowledge; it considers sense data, impressions, and their consequent ideas; how these become related and give rise to experience. Our author is concerned with knowledge as it relates to the object, the external world. In Book II he treats this same object as it relates to the subject, his feelings, passions, and emotions. In Book III he brings these two aspects of knowledge together and relates them to the enterprise of living. The Treatise as a whole has a unity of structure which could scarcely arise except from a full command of the issues to be treated, and lengthy labor in classification and organization. There is a logical as well as historical continuity here which marks the Treatise as a fully consummated enterprise, taking its origin from one connected labor of thought.

(ii) The same can scarcely be said regarding the second and more popular presentation of Hume's philosophy, which in its composition is spread over ten years, with the logical and historical continuity broken. The Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding, which answers to Book I of the Treatise, came out in 1748; the Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which answers to Book III, appeared in 1751; whereas not until in 1757 did Hume put out the Dissertation on the Passions, which answers to Book II. Here as we see the whole logical and his-

torical structure of the earlier work is broken up, whole sections of the Treatise are thrown out; its connected tenor much modified, and the whole wears the earmarks of a studied attempt to win the attention of the general reader, and the favor of the hostile critic.

Hume was very desirous of literary fame and recognition in philosophy. The acquisition of these were necessary things to his very life and existence. He had given up practically everything else this world has to offer, except his honor and dignity, for recognition in his field. His vanity, his pride, his self-respect depended on his winning the approval of the educated public. His masterpiece, his first born, towards the production of which he had given nine years of his life, failed utterly, during his lifetime, to win him the respect, at least among his own countrymen, which he so much desired. He never lived to see his Treatise acknowledged among his own people.

In his old age Hume refers to the publication and reception of his first work in these words:

"Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots."¹

In an Advertisement placed at the beginning of some Pieces comprizing his popularized philosophy, of which the first was the Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding, Hume says,

"Most of the principles, and reasonings, contained in this volume, were published in a work in three volumes, called A Treatise of Human Nature: a work which the author had projected before he left college, and which he wrote and published not long after. But not finding it successful, he was sensible of his error in going to the press too early, and he cast the whole anew in the following pieces, where some negligences in his former reasoning and more in the expression, are, he hopes, corrected. Yet several writers, who have honoured the author's philosophy with answers, have taken care to direct all their batteries against that juvenile work, which the author never acknowledged, and have affected to triumph in any advantage, which, they imagined, they had obtained over it: a practice very contrary to all the rules of candour and fair dealing, and a strong instance of those polemical artifices, which a bigotted zeal thinks itself authorized to employ. Henceforth, the author desires, that the following Pieces may alone be regarded as containing his

¹Ess. I. 2.

philosophical sentiments and principles."¹

In this connection G. Birkbeck Hill observes that "In a review of Hume's Life in the Annual Register, 1776, ii, 28, Beattie is reproached with obtaining a pension by leveling all his arguments against Hume's 'juvenile production.'"²

Hume's public repudiation of his Treatise has led to a great deal of misunderstanding regarding his philosophical opinions.³ The first serious comparative study of the philosophical merits of our author's two forms of philosophy was made by Selby-Bigge in the early nineties. This study grew out of a long association with Hume's writings, not only as a scholar and philosopher, but also as editor of his Treatise and Enquiries.

Selby-Bigge says that,

"Perhaps it may be allowed the writer here to record his own adherence to those who judge Hume's philosophy by his Treatise. Book I of the Treatise is beyond doubt a work of first-rate philosophic importance, and in some ways the most important work of philosophy in the English language. It would be impossible to say the same of the Enquiries, and although in one sense the Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals is the best thing Hume ever wrote, to ignore the Treatise is to deprive him of his place among the great thinkers of Europe."⁴

What this "one sense" is in which the second Enquiry excels Book III we must gather by implication from Selby-Bigge's study. We gather that this one sense concerns Hume's added "tenderness towards benevolence,"⁵ which the editor finds in the Enquiry as contrasted with Book III. It might also conceivably concern the superb philosophic style and elegance of diction which our author achieved in no one of his other writings with the possible exception of the Dialogues.

In the Treatise sympathy is generated from simpler elements. It is derived by the conversion of an idea into an impression, with a consequent transposition of situation with the person with whom one sympathizes. In this connection Selby-Bigge remarks,

"Hume may have felt that the machinery assigned to sympathy in Book II of the Treatise did not work very well, and so

¹E. 2.

²H. 302.

³Mr. Selby-Bigge observes that "by Mr. Grose the Advertisement is regarded as 'the post-humous utterance of a splenetic invalid,' and Mr. Green's elaborate criticism is directed almost entirely against the Treatise" (p. ix, "Introduction" to Enquiries).

⁴E. x-xi.

⁵E. xxvii.

have decided to get rid of it, but in so doing he may be said to have abandoned perhaps the most distinctive feature of his moral system as expounded in the Treatise, so that in the Enquiry there is little to distinguish his theory from the ordinary moral-sense theory, except perhaps a more destructive use of 'utility.'¹

In his autobiography, our author refers to his second Enquiry in these words, it

"in my opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject) is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unobserved into the world."² Selby-Bigge and Albee tend to agree with Hume in this pronouncement insofar only, however, as it concerns our author's distinctive moral views and prose accomplishments.

"Speaking broadly," says Selby-Bigge, "we may say that in the Treatise nothing is more clear than that sympathy is used as a solvent to reduce complex feelings to simpler elements. In the Enquiry sympathy is another name for social feeling, humanity, benevolence, natural philanthropy, rather than the name of the process by which the social feeling has been constructed out of non-social or individual feeling."³

Albee in treating of the same problem says:

"Now the important difference between the standpoint of the Treatise and that of the Enquiry... consists in the radically different answers given in the two works to the question: What are the springs of action? In the Treatise these are held to be (1) egoism, (2) limited altruism, and (3) 'sympathy.' The relation between them is difficult to state in a few words -- indeed, so far as 'sympathy' is concerned, difficult to state at all -- but Hume's position in the

¹E.xxvi. ²Ess. I, 4; cf. L. I. 175, 227, where similar sentiments are expressed.

³E. xxvi. He refers to secs. 180, 182, 186, 199, 203, 210, 221-3; cf. Laird, 238, who finds little difference in Hume's actual meaning regarding benevolence in both works; the Enquiry on close analysis teaching a confined generosity. "It seems clear that when Hume spoke of 'humanity' he was really thinking of a rather limited community, and was not seriously concerned about the souls of Hottentots, as if he had been a Christian missionary. Indeed, he remarked very properly that it was better for the general interest of mankind that men should aim at 'a duly limited object' than that they should be prompted by 'loose indeterminate views to the good of aspecies' (E. 225n.). Yet Hume's 'humanity' was loose and indeterminate." (See 238; cf. 237ff.)

Treatise apparently is that human nature is essentially egoistic. As regards altruism, he holds distinctly that we have no particular love for our fellow-beings as such. Our limited altruism manifests itself only in the case of those standing to us in the closest relations of life, and in a way that does not permit us to suppose that it is an original principle in human nature, strictly co-ordinate with the self-regarding tendency."¹

In the Enquiry Hume regards sympathy as the "foundation of the historical development of morality."² This latter interpretation is equally true of the Treatise; for the office of sympathy is the same whether it be underived or generated.

The position held by Selby-Bigge and Albee regarding the respective philosophic merits of Hume's two treatises on morals (they are largely in agreement), as well as to Hume's position in each, is only one of several interpretations in the field.

Mr. John Laird does not believe with Selby-Bigge that there is any important change of position in the Enquiry as compared with Book III of the Treatise.³ Laird is only able to hold this position by refusing to discuss the problem of sympathy. In fact, his work almost ignores the mechanism of sympathy, which is such a distinctive feature of the whole Treatise. This omission on Laird's part throws a blemish on his otherwise excellent account of Hume's philosophy. But if we take Hume's account of sympathy seriously, as set forth in the Treatise, then we certainly have to acknowledge that the second Enquiry evidences not only a change of tone but is actually and "really and essentially different" in the fundamental principles set forth. This inconsistency in Hume may perhaps be avoided by interpreting his aim in the latter work as popular as contrasted with the Treatise's rigorously scientific and analytical bent.

Laird comments on Selby-Bigge's "Introduction" to the Enquiries in this fashion: (a) the use made of the principle of parsimony is about the same in the two works; (b) benevolence, which, in the Treatise, is confined and limited, turns out to be the same in the Enquiry when rigorously examined;⁵ (c) the office of sympathy in the Enquiry is to account for the generality of approval.

"It is surely difficult to believe, with Hume, that a minute particle of the dove in every human breast could be developed into a universal moral sentiment, having each of these three

¹Ernest Albee, A History of English Utilitarianism (London, 1902), p. 95.

²Ibid., p. 97

³Laird, 237.

⁴Laird, 238.

⁵Ibid.

aspects of generality,"¹

viz., (i) common to all; (ii) comprehensive of all human actions; and (iii) directed co-operatively toward a common good.

Gizycki understood Hume to teach the same doctrines in his two moral treatises (see above p. 2). McGilvary insists that our author teaches a universal benevolence equally in both treatises, and Miss Shearer follows McGilvary's lead with some added elaboration (see above p. 3). Laird, as we have just seen, interprets Hume to have taught a confined and limited benevolence in both his moral treatises. We thus see that Laird and McGilvary are very much at odds in their interpretations. Albee holds with Laird on the Treatise and with McGilvary on the Enquiry.

We began this study by the setting forth of seven canons by the means of which we might in some measure settle the differences in interpretation regarding our author's position on moral philosophy. The questions to be raised and, if possible, solved were these: (i) What has given and still gives rise to all this difference of interpretation concerning Hume's position on sympathy? The answering of this question will lead up to the next, viz., (ii) By what means may we establish what constitutes Hume's position on metaphysics and epistemology? If this can be satisfactorily solved, we may raise the further question, (iii) Which of our author's two statements of moral theory is more in accord with his established metaphysics and epistemology? If this can be shown to fall clearly with Books II and III of the Treatise, we may legitimately dismiss as irrelevant all interpretation which takes its rise from divergences which the Enquiries, or other of Hume's writings, bear to the Treatise. Only by some such limitations as here suggested can we hope to introduce consistency in Humean criticism.

To flounder about as each critic happens to be moved by his peculiar philosophic biases and prejudices, without having set up or accepted any canons of agreement, will only result, if continued, in further cluttering the field with meaningless jargon. To clear up a mess we must define what needs to be done; we may then construct instruments (canons of agreement) with which to clear up the mess, and having done this we may proceed. If our method, canons, and statement of philosophic prejudices seem not adequate to the problems, we answer by saying that they are subject to refinement. Whatever modest beginnings we may make here towards consistency and intelligibility in philosophic criticism, may lead in time to a methodology which may carry promise for the future.

¹Laird, 239.

SECTION II

Die Aufklärung des Grundes

Let us begin by placing our finger on the source of nearly all the difficulties within the Humean literature concerning morals. The source of this lies in the failure of critics either to recognize the necessity, or to insist upon the importance, of consistency in what they attribute to Hume in metaphysics and epistemology, and what they say are his teachings on morals. If what they attribute to him on these two heads are consistent, there is some hope of agreement; otherwise they are just beating the air and parading their own pet philosophic prejudices.

We now beg the reader to revert to our seven canons (as set forth on pages 10 and 11) in order to see how these instruments may assist us in clearing up the difficulties. Canon IV reads, "Where an author has written more than one work on metaphysics and epistemology, that work is to be held to represent his views on these matters which most adequately, fully, and scientifically treats of these problems."

Canon VI connects with canon IV in this manner: "Where there is a preponderance of philosophic opinion regarding the relation of one of two works to canon IV, this opinion constitutes a decision from which there can be no just appeal, except to personal prejudice." And canon VII reads thus:

"Where a philosopher advances opinions inconsistent with his avowed and acknowledged metaphysics and epistemology, we may legitimately and justifiably assume that these opinions are either unavoidable concessions to public opinion,¹ or else they are hasty and unguarded statements, which, on either alternative, are unworthy of dispute or the attempt to

¹That Hume recognized the unavoidability of concessions to popular prejudice is brought out in a letter where he touches on this head: either the publishers or the author himself, William Eden (1744-1814), had sent Hume a complimentary copy of The Principles of Penal Law. In a letter to Strahan, Aug. 19th, 1771, Hume comments on the author: "I did not imagine, however, that so ingenious a man would in this age have had so much weak superstition, as appears in many passages. But these perhaps were inserted only from decency and prudence: and so the world goes on, in perpetual deceiving themselves and one another." (L.II.248.)

reconcile them with his general principles, and should hence be dismissed as if they had never been written."

Canon I concerns consistency in smaller details, viz., that words or terms are bearers of meanings; that after terms have been defined, they continue to bear the meanings first attached to them, unless otherwise specifically noted. Canon II rules that passages in an author which are inconsistent with canon I are to be thrown out as not modifying the internal consistency of his thought.

Now, since philosophic opinion is practically, if not wholly, in favor of the Treatise as being that work which most adequately, fully, and scientifically represents Hume's views on metaphysics and epistemology, and since from this decision there can be no just appeal, except to personal prejudice, it follows that a philosopher's own avowed and acknowledged first principles and epistemology are the final court of appeal, the ultimate tribunal, to which all matters of inconsistency in his thought are referred. There is no way of getting back of this, nor is there any need for it. We can find no more appropriate tribunal in which to weigh the meaningfulness or seriousness or consistency of any thinker's opinions (or any critic's interpretation of these opinions) than his own avowed and acknowledged metaphysical principles and epistemology. If there be some other more appropriate tribunal, we should be pleased to have it formulated and set forth. But we feel, however, that there can be no appeal from the tribunal which we have set forth. Thus we shall rest satisfied in what we have here erected until such a time as we may be corrected.

So far we have settled questions (i) and (ii) as set forth on page 101. We have placed our finger on the source of the difficulties and differences in Humean criticism as this relates to his morals, and more particularly to sympathy, and we located it in the failure to recognize the necessity, or to insist upon the importance, of consistency in what is attributed to Hume on metaphysics and epistemology, and on morals. We have also answered the second question; and we have set up the Treatise, Books I and II, as the ultimate tribunal to which all things must be referred in Humean criticism. We may now proceed to the third question, viz., which of our author's two statements of moral theory, Book III of the Treatise or the second Enquiry, as this relates to sympathy, is more in accordance with Books I and II of the Treatise, the ultimate tribunal? The arguments of Book II follow inevitably from what has been set forth in Book I, so that if we should limit the tribunal to Book I, we should get the same results as if we considered them both. There are two aspects to

Hume's theory of knowledge, viz.: (i) the more particularly relational side which considers the external world as objects related; and (ii) the more particularly affectional side which concerns the effects which these objects have upon us in defining our actions and in giving rise to belief. Book I considers the first aspect, Book II the second. This dichotomy is not rigidly held to, for Hume indulges quite freely in an inter-play of these two aspects in the progress of his thought throughout the two books. To get a full view, therefore, of Hume's theory of knowledge one must consider Books I and II in their entirety.

Let us see then how it stands with sympathy in Books I and II of the Treatise. Any idea of the mind, properly so called, can have but two possible sources, either impressions of sense or impressions of reflection. In order that the latter may appear, the former must precede in time. We find no impression of sense which is the direct antecedent of sympathy. Impressions of sense derive from things, external objects; we know not sympathy as such an object. Our notion, therefore, concerning it does not arise from impressions of sense. Since it is not a sense datum, it must either be an original principle of the mind, irreducible and inherent, or an idea of reflection. Let us consider the former possibility.

On the one hand we have sense data, on the other, mind, experience, i.e., interpretation of these sense data by the human organism. In giving an account of experience Hume finds eight irreducible interpretive categories, viz., pleasure and pain,¹ identity, space and time, cause and effect, resemblance, contrariety, degrees in quality, and proportions of quantity or number.² All other principles of the human mind take their origin from the combined functioning of these eight. In this list of irreducible principles the closest one to sympathy is pleasure and pain. Now sympathy is not the same with pleasure and pain, for pleasure and pain in the categorial sense has to do with an original feltness in or of our own body, whereas the pleasure or pain with which sympathy is concerned, or direct at, is usually regarded as a state of consciousness in some other body. We speak of sympathizing with some one's happy mood or miserable state, i.e., we try to enter into his emotions. Now it may be equally true that we do the same with ourself when we try to enter into a future state of our self. Anticipation is no doubt a species of sympathy. We project ourself into the future, and create such a situation as would give rise to the satisfaction of desire. In doing this it seems that we are sympathizing with our future self;

¹T. 118; cf. 574.

²T. 14-5.

we are trying to understand how we would feel in a projected situation, i.e., we are now in the present attempting to enter into some future state of our emotional life. If the future emotional state as felt now in the present is satisfactory, we by that token approve the actions requisite to the creation of a real situation answering to the one we created in our imagination.

Now pleasure or pain is not a sense datum but an internal state of a subject, and hence it cannot be gotten at as located in an other's body by means of impressions of sense. Yet we are said to feel (or participate in) the pleasure or pain of other persons by means of sympathy. The question arose in Hume's mind how this was possible.

We have seen that Hume did not find any irreducible principle of the human mind which answers to sympathy. Of this there can be no shadow of doubt. Nor could he by any ingenuity account for our notion of it by the direct means of impressions of sense. Impressions of sense arise from external objects. Sympathy then is not an object perceived. Hence this avenue is forever closed. Of the three possible sources of sympathy, viz., (i) as an irreducible principle, (ii) as derived directly from sense-impressions, and (iii) as derived from impressions of reflection, we have already closed (i) and (ii). There remains then the possibility that sympathy may be derived from impressions of reflection. If it be so derived then it is a passion, an emotional state of the subject.¹

"Impressions may be divided into two kinds, those of SENSATION and those of REFLECTION.... The second is derived in a great measure from our ideas, and that in the following manner. An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or another. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflection, because derived from it. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which perhaps in their turn give rise to other impressions and ideas."²

We are here in the immediate antecedents of the moral judgment. When we reflect upon ideas of reflection, viz., desires or aversions, this reflection gives rise to new impressions, which are either agreeable or disagreeable, and which, in their translation

¹T. 1; cf. 7.

²T. 7-8.

into ideas by the memory and imagination, become ideas of approval or disapproval.

Hume says that, "Sympathy... is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination."¹ We enter into the sentiments of others by placing ourself, by the force of the imagination, in their situations and exposing ourself to the objects which excite them. There does not seem to be any other possible manner in which sympathy could arise in the terms of Hume's fundamental principles. We feel our own pleasure or pain but never that of somebody else. What is at any time present to us is our own sense-impressions and their concomitant pleasures and pains, and the ideas which these beget and their consequent impressions of reflection. These impressions of reflection are what we otherwise call passions and emotions, among which is every species of sympathy. In the third and last section of this chapter we shall attempt to give a minute account of how sympathy is derived. For the present we feel that we have sufficiently established Hume's position, on the derivative character of sympathy as exhibited in the Treatise, to warrant us to rule that any passages in the second Enquiry which affirm an underived and irreducible principle of sympathy, should be thrown out as irrelevant to what has been agreed upon as representing his philosophy. If this procedure seem unduly arbitrary then please consider the consequences of affirming an underived sympathy. It would entail Hume's giving up his account of the generation of belief or assent, of sympathy, and of the moral judgment, which all hang by the same line, and the giving up of which would require the re-writing of the whole Treatise. In the light of what has been said above we shall now proceed to evaluate the more significant criticisms levelled at our author's moral philosophy.

We have already observed that the source of most of the misunderstanding regarding Hume's whole philosophy arises from the failure to recognize the importance of consistency between what is attributed to him in epistemology and in morals. The one critic of Hume who may perhaps be said to be the most competent judge of all his writings is Selby-Bigge. He observes that,

"In reading Hutcheson we feel that he makes out a good case for his 'benevolence'² against Hobbes and Mandeville and the more insidious selfishness of Shaftesbury, but that it would

¹T. 427; cf. 362-3, 364-5, 367f, 385-7, 576, 579, 589, 603.

²See Hutcheson's Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, 1725, where we are told, "That as the author of nature has determined us to receive, by our external senses, pleasant or disagreeable ideas of objects, according as they are

fall an easy prey to the 'sympathy' of Hume's Treatise.¹ Selby-Bigge then goes on to quote from and comment on the doctrines of the Enquiry and then finally contrasts them with the Treatise in this fashion:

"The old difficulty of 'general rules,' 'the general and unalterable point of view,' re-appears in the Enquiry, though I think it is dealt with in a manner quite foreign to the Treatise. In the Treatise the universality of our moral judgments and their detachment from private interest was accounted for by sympathy (Treatise, Book III, part ii, sec. 11, p. 500; Book III, part iii, sec. 1, p. 618). But sympathy itself varies with time, place and person, and consequently requires correction, which is supplied by the use of general rules (Book III, part iii, sec. 1, pp. 581-5).² How these corrective rules are obtained he does not explain in the Treatise, and indeed they seem to work in a circle with sympathy. In the Enquiry they again appear, and are in the first place ascribed to the 'intercourse of sentiments in society and conversation' (sec. 186), arising apparently in the same way as 'general ideas,' which are really only particular ideas with their particularity rubbed off by wear and tear. But in sections 221-2 of the Enquiry he asserts the universality of the moral judgments in quite a new style. 'The notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind which recommends the same object to general approbation and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it. It also implied some sentiment, so universal and comprehensive as to extend to all mankind, and render the actions and conduct even of persons the most remote, an object of applause and censure.... These two requisites belong alone to the sentiment of Humanity.' This sentiment is the only 'universal principle of

useful or hurtful to our bodies; and to receive from uniform objects the pleasures of beauty and harmony, to excite us to the pursuit of knowledge, and to reward us for it;...in the same manner he has given us a moral sense, to direct our actions, and to give us still nobler pleasures, so that while we are only intending the good of others, we undesignedly promote our own greatest good" (II, 1, vii). The moral sense is not to be taken as an innate idea but as an original and natural determination of our mind (Ibid.). Hume in his correspondence with Hutcheson in 1739 objected to this assumption on the ground that it assumed what required to be explained (See B.I. 113f).

¹E.xxvi-vii.

²Cf. Adam Smith, Moral Sentiments, p.229,

the human frame,' and 'can alone be the foundation of morals or any general system of blame or praise.' 'One man's ambition is not another's ambition, nor will the same event or object satisfy both: but the humanity of one man is the humanity of every one, and the same object touches the passion in all human creatures.' This may not be the 'moral sense,' but it certainly is not the doctrine of the Treatise."¹

This is Selby-Bigge's final judgment of the relation and consistency of certain passages in the Enquiry as contrasted with the Treatise, as these relate to the ultimate principles of human nature. In the Treatise sympathy is derived from original and private pleasures and pains, which enliven an idea we have of some one else whose situation and exciting objects we believe by analogy would cause such passions as we infer are his; we then by the force of the imagination transpose ourself into his situation; this transposition causes us to view the objects which excite him, and the ideas of these exciting objects reflecting upon ourself give rise to new impressions, which further enliven and vivify our whole imagination and hence our idea of him, which vivification is what we mean by sympathy. In this transposition of situation with some one else, we in a sense become that person by analogy, and thus while we are in this transposed state, we would do for him what we would desire that any one else would do for us, were we actually and really in such a situation.

In accordance with the teachings of the Treatise a passion (and hence sympathy) can only arise as the result of an appropriate stimulus, and when that stimulus is removed, the passion generated tends quickly to subside into the habitual and rather unconcerned on-going process of life. In the Enquiry the position is taken that sympathy is not generated but is an original, underived, and irreducible principle of our frame, and as such, is a constant ever-flowing passion which oozes and embraces indiscriminately every one and everything whether it be an appropriate stimulus or not. This is in direct contradiction to the most firmly established principles of the Treatise, and Selby-Bigge has pointed this out very clearly in the paragraph which we have just quoted from his Introduction. All passages, therefore, in the Enquiry which affirm an underived and irreducible principle

"The regard to those general rules of conduct is what is properly called a sense of duty, a principle of the greatest consequence in human life, and the only principle by which the bulk of mankind are capable of directing their actions."

¹E. xxvii-ix. Italics ours.

of sympathy, and such passages also in the Treatise which, because of some ambiguity, may be interpreted as affirming such a principle, all such passages, we say, we feel privileged to dismiss as irrelevant to Hume's established metaphysical principles, epistemology, and general philosophy in accordance with canons II, III, IV, VI, and VII (see Chapter I, Section 3 on method).¹

Let us now turn to Albee's treatment of Hume regarding the merits of the latter's several works and regarding the historian's treatment of sympathy as found in these works. He acknowledges in reference to Cumberland and Gay that "it is more difficult than might be supposed to present" Hume's "views of Ethics in a way to leave no room for misunderstanding."² This results from his having left us his ethical theory in two forms, written at intervals of some twelve or fourteen years.

Regarding the respective merits of Hume's several works, our historian says that the Treatise is

"in spite of its defects... perhaps the most remarkable single work in English philosophical literature."³

In the first Enquiry, which answers to Book I of the Treatise, our author has pruned away many of the subtle distinctions which so tended to confuse the reader.

"But, unfortunately," says Albee, "Hume was not so much trying to improve the book as trying to make it more acceptable. The result is that, along with what was at once irrelevant and of doubtful validity, he omitted much that was really essential to the adequate statement of his peculiar views on metaphysics."⁴

One would naturally expect the same observation to hold true of the second Enquiry as contrasted with Book III, but our historian does not see it thus. He says,

"I am strongly of the opinion that the Enquiry is not only a clearer, but a better statement of Hume's ethical theory than the third book of the Treatise."⁵

¹During the twenty-seven years from the first appearance of the second Enquiry to Hume's death, this work went through many editions. Hume made corrections for each edition. Writing to Strahan, his publisher, two weeks before his death, Hume says, "Please to make with your pen the following correction. In the second volume of my philosophical Pieces," the Enquiry on morals, "p. 245, l. 1 and 2, erase these words, that there is such a sentiment in human nature as benevolence" (L, II, 331, see foot-note 5 on same page for comparison of passage as it stood and as corrected (E. 181.)).

³Hist. Eng. Util., p. 94.

²Hist. Eng. Util., p. 92.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

He finds a more consecutive treatment of moral problems in the latter work, but beyond this and what is of more importance in the second Enquiry is that here

"Hume does away with the one exasperating ambiguity of his earlier work, i.e., his treatment of 'sympathy.'"¹

We must confess that we have failed to find this "exasperating ambiguity" in Hume's treatment of sympathy in the Treatise. One becomes here immediately suspicious that our historian is giving vent to a philosophical prejudice regarding the ultimate principles of human nature. After acknowledging that Book I, if not also Book II, represents Hume's true position on metaphysics, how can Albee possibly say that the treatment of sympathy in the second Enquiry "is not only a clearer, but a better statement of Hume's ethical theory than the third book of the Treatise"?² There is an inconsistency attributed to Hume here which can never hang together. The failure to note this glaring inconsistency can only be accounted for because of some ingrained and deep-seated philosophic bias.

In Books I and II of the Treatise the passions (and hence sympathy) can only arise as the result of an appropriate stimulus, and this arising can only come about by derivation, the mechanism of which is one of the most distinctive features of Hume's whole theory of knowledge, as we have already pointed out earlier, in our treatment of the imagination and the genesis of belief. In the second Enquiry, on the other hand, Hume dismisses the whole mechanism connected with the generation of sympathy, and affirms the latter as an original, irreducible principle of human nature, excusing himself by saying that "it is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or fellow-feeling with others."³ Here the derivation of sympathy is dropped for the obvious reason of not wishing to bother the general reader and certain Christian theologians with abstruse analyses.

This seemingly unavoidable concession to the prejudices of public opinion should be taken by philosophers in the spirit in which our author made it, viz., that the more general character of his philosophy might be made available in a form acceptable to the general reading public. Hume also desired philosophic and literary approval. This had been refused him on the Treatise, so he made another attempt to win approbation by appealing to the wider public. We can conceive of no possible motive why Hume should ever have been moved to write the Enquiries if his Treatise had received any sort of a half-decent reception during the first ten years after its appearance.

¹Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid.

³E. 219, foot-note.

We now turn to an interpretation of Hume's ethical writings which differs considerably from that of Selby-Bigge and Albee. We are referring here to the ingenuity exhibited by Mr. E. B. McGilvary in the article entitled "Altruism in Hume's Treatise,"¹ where, on the first page he says,

"It is the purpose of this paper to examine the position of the Treatise on this subject. The result, as the writer believes, will show that Hume admits the existence of an original altruism as fully in his earlier as in his later work."² McGilvary establishes his position only by constantly violating canons II and V (see pp. 10-11), as we shall presently point out.

After some introductory remarks our critic says that, "Hume divides the passions into those which 'arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable,' and those which are founded on pleasure and pain."³

Both these quotations are taken from the end of Book II where Hume is dealing specifically with the direct passions, and the opening paragraph (Book II, pt. ii, sec. ix.) reads thus:

"Tis easy to observe, that the passions, both direct and the indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that in order to produce an affection of any kind, 'tis only requisite to present some good or evil. Upon the removal of pain and pleasure there immediately follows a removal of love and hatred, pride and humility, desire and aversion, and of most of our reflective or secondary impressions."⁴

Hume then goes on to add in the next paragraph,

"The impressions, which arise from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation are the direct passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil, though they be conceived merely in idea, and to be considered as to exist in any future period of time."⁵

On the next page Hume goes on to say that,

"DESIRE arises from good considered simply, and AVERSION is derived from evil. The will exerts itself, when either the good or the absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body."⁶

Then suddenly a thought occurs to Hume which fits in nowhere with his established principles, viz., that,

¹Philos. Rev., vol. XII, pp. 272-298, 1903.

²Ibid., p. 272.

³Ibid., p. 276.

⁴T. 438.

⁵T. 438.

⁶T. 439.

"Besides good and evil, or in other words, pain and pleasure, the direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment of our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections."¹

The quotations we have given here are the context from which McGilvary lifted the two quotations embodied in the passage we cited from his article. We wish to cite it again in order to contrast it clearly with the context out of which it is lifted. He says, "Hume divides the passions into those which 'arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable,'" which is taken from our quotation (1), Hume's afterthought, "and those which are 'founded on pain and pleasure,'" which quotation is taken from our quotation (4) which reads in its unlifted state, "'Tis easy to observe, that the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure." Now Hume makes no such division of the passions as McGilvary wishes to suggest to the reader. McGilvary is no doubt aware of this for in the progress of his article he makes considerable amends for the license taken in the beginning.

In this same connection McGilvary finds two other passages in Book II which he interprets as meaning that Hume is affirming an original, underived benevolence and resentment in the form of instincts originally implanted in our natures. These two quotations are the following:

"But though the desire of the happiness or misery of others, according to the love or hatred we bear them, be an arbitrary and original instinct implanted in our nature, we find it may be counterfeited on many occasions, and may arise from secondary principles."²

The words we have italicized are very important. They bear a qualification which McGilvary seems to overlook, for he seems to

¹T. 439; cf. Laird, 191, "This admission of ultimate natural appetites seems peculiar on the part of a philosopher who was anxious to exploit the resources of association in opposition to a facile multiplicity of instincts, and Green (G. II, 33) considers it 'curiously cool,' on the ground that a philosopher so hedonistic as Hume should never have accepted a principle that refuted hedonism in at least one essential particular. The truth seems to be, however, that these unaccountable impulses did not interest Hume. He formally included them among the 'direct passions' and that was all."

²T. 368-9.

read the passage as if they were not there at all. Love and hatred are indirect passions, and when these have arisen consequent upon appropriate stimuli, we love or hate the object who was the bearer of the stimulus (motives of good - or ill-will towards us).

We tend to embrace or avoid such persons as, in our opinion, designedly cause us pleasure or pain, respectively. This original and irreducible principle of our frame we have placed in the category of pleasure and pain. The expression of this principle of our frame through the passion of love or benevolence is what Albee calls "limited altruism," and others have called private benevolence or confined generosity. To the question, what are the springs of action, the fundamental tendencies of human nature, Albee answers, "In the Treatise, these are held to be (1) egoism, (2) limited altruism, and (3) 'sympathy.'¹ On the whole Albee's formulation is correct, if by egoism we mean nothing necessarily more than that everything we feel, imagine, think and do is inexorably tied to a personal reference.²

The second quotation mentioned above is this:

"Now 'tis certain, there are certain calm desires and tendencies, which, though they be real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling of sensation. These desires are of two kinds; either certain instincts originally implanted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, considered merely as such."³

This passage is taken from a section treating of the influencing motives of the will, and from a paragraph where Hume is concerned to show that certain biological tendencies of the human organism are sometimes taken for determinations of reason. Hume's use of the term "desire" in the passage quoted as almost, if not wholly, a synonym for tendency, is out of accord with the meaning he has attached to the term in its general use throughout the Treatise.

¹Hist. Eng. Util., p. 95.

²Cf. C. D. Broad, Five Types of Ethical Theory, p. 93, "I cannot help thinking that there is... a latent trace of egoistic psychological hedonism in Hume's theory. I suspect that he is tacitly assuming that the fact that I direct a certain emotion on to the supposed pleasure or pain of another is intelligible if and only if it be mediated by a feeling of pleasure or pain in myself." Broad is led to this interpretation on the basis of an innate sentiment of humanity in accordance with his understanding of the second Enquiry, which he holds to be the "best account of Hume's theory" (p. 84). On this same point Cf. Laird, 191-2, 203, 204, 219.

³T. 417.

Strictly speaking, on Hume's established theory, a desire can arise only as the result of an appropriate stimulus. This stimulus may be either a sense-impression, a bodily impression (giving rise to hunger, thirst, etc.), or an impression of reflection. A desire, properly and exactly speaking, arises only from impressions of reflection. We do not become aware of desires or aversions until after we have become aware of pleasure or pains of which the desires or aversions are reflections. This should be perfectly evident to anyone who will consult his own mind on this head.

The five quotations which we have brought forth, which McGilvary cites from the Treatise, and which are all essential as evidences in his interpretation, are all of such nature as to violate canon II, which rules against the use of passages which show a relapse from definition, inconsistency with the whole, or which may arise out of moods, temporary persuasions of the author, and from over-statement in the heat of establishing some point.

The later half of McGilvary's article is taken up with showing that not only do the indirect passions give rise to limited altruism but also to extension benevolence. McGilvary's evidence for asserting the latter circumstance we shall now make it our business to examine. But before we enter upon this we wish here to acknowledge that there is much in McGilvary's analysis of Hume with which we are in hearty accord and which is of very great significance in properly understanding his limited altruism, viz., the doctrine "that pleasure and pain function dynamically, and not teleologically, in the production of the passions."¹ McGilvary has pointed this out very clearly, and this in itself is no inconsiderable reason for writing an article on Hume. What our critic is here insisting upon is that pleasure and pain (as reflective impressions) function dynamically as the stimulus to an action which need not necessarily have as its end pleasure or the avoidance of pain to the subject but to the object of the passions, viz., some other person. This is a very significant point in Hume's doctrine of limited altruism. If this be taken to reject conclusively psychological hedonism, we should like to have him who so feels answer the following question: If pleasure (or pain) be that which moves to an action which has as its end an object wholly divorced from any relation to the self of the actor, what is the causal relation between your own pleasure or pain which moves you, which is the cause, and a certain feeling state in an other person, which is the effect? We are desirous

¹Philos. Rev., vol. XII, p. 282.

of knowing how these two things are related. For, whoever thinks he can refute psychological hedonism must be prepared to give a rational explanation of the question we have set up. If all that is present to us at any time is our own feeling state at the then time, what else can we ever ultimately desire but some future state in our own person? This condition should not be overlooked. For ourself to desire your good is to desire it as we see it, and unless we see it as desirable it can have absolutely no motive power over us.

McGilvary insists by a great ingenuity of argument, which unfortunately is too long to quote here,

"that in the Treatise sympathy does not consist in the fact that we unconsciously put ourselves in the place of the person sympathized with, and, in a sense, feel for ourselves, rather than strictly feel for him. Sympathy does not make us feel for ourselves, but makes us ourselves feel for the same object the same passion which the other man feels. We feel for the other man, just what he feels for himself."¹

Now, if we "ourselves feel for the same object the same passions which the other man feels," we cannot see how this differs from placing ourself in his position and beholding the objects which excite him. This transposition of ourself into his position is the very mechanism whereby we are enabled to have ourself excited by the objects which excite him. There is no other manner in which this can be brought about except by a change of position.²

We certainly do not perceive through sense-perception the emotional state of another. We perceive a physical object, say a man, and from his behavior we infer (causation), by reference to similar behavior in ourself under emotional strain, that he is emotionally excited. We immediately look for the exciting objects (causes) and when these appear in our transposed state of situation, we say that we understand his happiness or misery, i.e., we sympathize with him. We have entered into his emotional state by placing ourself in his shoes, so to speak, and beholding (in idea or actually) the objects which excite him.

McGilvary quotes the first of the two following sentences

¹Philos. Rev., vol. XII, p. 294. ²Cf. Adam Smith, Moral Sentiments, pp. 3-4, "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. Though our brother is upon the rack, as long as we ourselves are at our ease, our senses will never inform us of what he suffers. They never did, and never can, carry us beyond our own person, and it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations."

from Hume,¹

"In general, it may be affirmed, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourself. 'Tis true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible, creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us, when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours."²

It is perfectly clear that both these sentences refer to limited altruism. Our critic quotes the first sentence and then adds,

"Let it be remarked, however, that this sentence does not deny the existence of 'an extensive benevolence;' that is, of a desire of the happiness of persons who do not please us by reason of their personal qualities, their past services, or some other relation to ourselves. As we shall see, Hume makes a very marked distinction between love and benevolence, and this sentence refers to love, not to benevolence. Mr. Selby-Bigge ought not to quote this sentence as an instance of 'passages which sternly limit' the 'extent and influence' of benevolence."³

McGilvary asserts that Hume makes a very marked distinction between love and benevolence, and that he is here referring to the former. We are not aware of this "very marked distinction," and the passages in the Treatise to which he refers the reader (pp. 481 and 488) do not reveal this at all. We invite any one to examine the pages in question as a warrant for our critic's interpretation, as revealed in his article.⁴ Our critic says that the sentence in question "refers to love, not to benevolence." He cites no evidence for this assertion, and certainly the Treatise as a whole does not bear him out in this particular.⁵

One of the sentences in McGilvary's concluding paragraph reads thus: "The difference between the two works," the Treatise and the second Enquiry. "is not due to any change in Hume's view of the irreducible motives that actuate human conduct."⁶ Our critic is insisting that Hume held to an irreducible principle of sympathy in both works. This we firmly believe he has in no sufficient

¹Philos. Rev., vol. XII, p. 291.

²T. 481.

³Philos. Rev., vol. XII, p. 291.

⁴Ibid., pp. 291 and 296.

⁵Cf. T. 7-8, 317f, 320, 362-3, 364-5, 385-7, 427, 576, 579, 589, 603.

⁶Philos. Rev., vol. XII, p. 297.

manner established. Nearly all his quotations violate the tenor and spirit of the Treatise. The last thing we wish to imply, however, is that McGilvary picked his passages consciously ignoring their out-of-toneness with the whole thoughtstructure of Hume's great work. We would rather say that he was pulled to these passages by some deep-rooted and powerful philosophic prejudice which blinded him to their inappropriateness for quotation.

The criticism offered here on McGilvary's interpretation, applies in most part to Miss Edna Aston Shearer's work entitled Hume's Place in Ethics, (1915). We see no need, therefore, of going through her treatment of sympathy in that she agrees with, and it would seem takes her cue from the article by McGilvary.

We have one short dissertation in German which treats directly of sympathy in Hume. Alfred Schwenninger concludes his study with these words:

"Die Grundlage unseres ethischen und ästhetischen Verhaltens ist die Sympathie," so sagt Hume immer wieder in seinen beiden philosophischen Hauptwerken. Welche psychologischen Tatsachen versteht er darunter? Das war der Gegenstand unserer Untersuchung. Humes erkenntnistheoretische und metaphysische Behauptungen wurden nur insoweit hereingezogen, als sie vom Einfluss auf sein psychologischen Anschauungen sind. Wir gelangten zur Einsicht, dass die Sympathie im Treatise eine andere ist als die im Enquiry. Dort wird sie als Erkenntnisprozess, hier als Gefühl verstanden."¹

Our German critic understands Hume to mean by the passion of sympathy that common element in every experience by which an insight is made possible into the life and experience of a person regarding his feelings and thoughts. In our sympathy with another we come to know what he desires, feels, and thinks. The peculiarity of this experience consists in its generation. He then goes on to say that the essential mark of these experiences is sympathy, the process by which we attain the experience.² Though there is some truth in this interpretation, one must own that Hume means more, in the Treatise, by the term sympathy that just the process, the mechanism of the passion. The process is an accounting of something which arises as a result, and it is properly this resultant state or passion which Hume understands by sympathy in his earlier work.

In the Enquiry, on the other hand, our German critic finds the characteristic mark of sympathy to lie in our concern for

¹Der Sympathiebegriff bei David Hume, p. 49.

²Ibid., p. 29.

others. How this feeling takes its origin does not interest Hume here. He interprets Hume as considering it unnecessary to examine into the antecedents of sympathy. It is sufficient that we find it as a principle of our nature. He then criticizes Hume for permitting himself to subsume under sympathy whatever he pleases.¹ On the whole this study is not particularly critical and the marks by which he distinguishes sympathy in Hume's two works are not very precise. To say that our author in his Treatise and Enquiry comprehends by sympathy, process and feeling, respectively, is not very enlightening, though it does throw some light on the matter.

We believe that we have here touched upon the more significant Humean documents which are directed in one way or another at our author's two accounts of sympathy.² We have tried to account for the misinterpretations evidenced in a spirit of fairness to the critic, and at the same time we have tried to keep in our eye the canons set forth as our guides in this study. The reader must finally judge whether we have in any manner succeeded in our task.

We wish, however, to say here once more, before we are done with criticizing criticism, that of all the critics of Hume, the one who commands our greatest respect, the one with whom we might disagree with considerable hesitancy, is Selby-Bigge. He knew our author's writings better, perhaps, than any other man who has lived in contemporary times, and he placed this knowledge at our disposal with such expediency and cleanness as to require only forty pages, viz., his "Introduction" to the Enquiries.

¹Ibid., p. 30.

²We lay no claims to having exhausted the Humean literature on this subject; but we do feel we have taken for appraisal and criticism such disquisitions as have had some considerable influence in Humean studies. Some may feel that Green's Introductions to Hume were hurriedly passed over. Such a criticism would be valid if Green had treated Hume's account of sympathy in a spirit of brotherly fairness. We feel, however, that Green was possessed by the German ideology which invaded English speaking university atmospheres during the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century. On this head, Selby-Bigge says, "Of Professor Green's criticism of Hume it is impossible to speak, here in Oxford, without the greatest respect. Apart from its philosophic importance, it is always serious and legitimate; but it is impossible not to feel that it would have been quite as important and a good deal shorter, if it had contained fewer of the verbal victories which are so easily won over Hume." (E. vii). These verbal victories, though they seem conclusive in their reading, leave the reader unconvinced.

SECTION III
The Genesis of the Moral Judgment

We have in the progress of this study quoted so largely from Hume's writings concerned with the generation of sympathy, the act of approval, and the arising of belief, that we may possibly be permitted, in this concluding section, as not violating the canons of critical scholarship, to give a final summary in our own words of Hume's conception of the genesis of approval. We do this as our final attempt to place before the reader a clear and concise account of the generation of sympathy, which was such an "exasperating ambiguity" to our historian, Mr. Albee.

Let us note here in the beginning that (i) the generation of assent or belief in any matter of fact, and (ii) the generation of approval concerning the moral quality of any action, have more things in common than may hastily be assumed. Both these acts of the mind participate in a common process, viz., the association of a lively idea with a present sense-impression or an impression of memory. If we remove the association of an idea from its appropriate impression, be this impression now originally present or derived, we make absolutely impossible the generation of assent to, belief in, or approval of, any matter of fact or action. If we say, therefore, as Hume seems to do in the second Enquiry, that no particular impression or stimulus is required for the generation of the acts of the mind just mentioned, we are directly contradicting the basic structure of the Treatise. Hume did not say this in the Enquiry in so many words. He simply said, loosely it certainly seems, that sympathy is an original principle of the human mind. If he meant this seriously, which we certainly do not think he did in the theoretical sense, then he would have to rewrite his theory of knowledge, for the genesis of belief rests on the same mechanism with sympathy and approval.

We may also observe that when we sympathize with some one, we are agreeing with the emotional disturbances which gave rise to his actions. We gain an insight into his emotional disturbances by placing ourself in his shoes and exposing ourself to the

various objects (causes) which excite him.¹ We do this most often by forming to ourself ideas of the exciting objects which moved him. We do this almost unconsciously while listening to a conversation of one who is telling us about some remarkable experience. If, during the course of the narration, we do not seem to enter into our narrator's sentiments he will think us cold and unsympathetic and on the whole badly mannered, if not unjust. He may try again, and describe in glowing colors the nature of the exciting objects which were his, and if we persist in remaining unmoved, i.e., unsympathetic, he will immediately take it that we do not agree with him in the actions which they occasioned, and he may further conclude that we are not only unjust, rude, and devoid of feeling, but that we are positively discourteous, all of which are species of a state of mind the opposite of sympathy.²

¹Cf. F. H. Allport, Social Psychology, (1924), pp. 234-5, "It is not the direct emotional behavior of the person, so much as the knowledge of the conditions affecting him that makes it possible for us to understand (and indeed to sympathize with) his state of mind." Allport holds the conditioned response theory of sympathy, as opposed to McDougall's theory of "sympathetic induction of emotions" (p. 234).

Allport summarizes his reflections on sympathy as follows: "(1) Sympathy is not an instinctive process; there is no direct innate effect of the emotion as expressed in one individual upon the emotional response of another. (2) The emotion aroused in the sympathizer is not necessarily a replica of that in the person who affords the stimulus. (3) The emotion aroused in the sympathizer is a part of his own system of emotional habits from past experience, evoked as a conditioned response to some element common to the original and the present situations. (4) Sympathy makes for better understanding in human adjustments, but it is not necessarily conducive either to altruism or to social justice" (p. 239). We can see from this that Allport has many things in common with Hume and Adam Smith, though we think the latter two would certainly hold that a healthy functioning of the principle of sympathy is very conducive to social justice. They might even agree with Allport that this need not "necessarily" be so, if by the latter is meant "without exception." We seem to sympathize with miserable states in distant persons and yet do absolutely nothing to relieve them.

²Cf. C. H. Cooley, Human Nature and the Social Order, (1902), "Sympathy is requisite to social power. Only insofar as a man understands other people and thus enters into the life

Assume on the other hand that during the course of this narration our imagination should form to ourself ideas of the exciting objects which our friend is painting to us, and assume further that we have in our memory images of objects somewhat similar to what our friend is describing, we will very naturally, if we change shoes with him, enter into sympathy with the emotional disturbances which gave rise to his actions. We may say then that we do precisely and exactly agree with him to the extent in which we sympathize with him.

In the former of these two instances, viz., where no sympathy was evidenced, it is evident that there was wanting in our experience memory images, actually once present sense-impressions, of exciting objects similar to what was described to us. This lack of sympathy may also flow in part from what may be called a desertion of spirit, a certain mental lethargy, which makes it almost impossible to move our imagination from its slumberous state. When so overcome we seem possessed with our own melancholy to the exclusion of everything else. In the former of the two instances given, whatever the cause may have been, we could not approve of our friend's actions, we could not agree with how he felt, we could not understand either the causes (exciting objects, stimuli), or the effects (his actions); in short, we could not enter into his situation, and hence not into his emotional state. In the latter instance all these relations and associations were reversed.

If, in the former of these two instances, we were born with an irreducible benevolent affection towards our kind, we should have sympathized with our narrator whether we had original impressions with which to enliven our ideas of his exciting objects or not.

around him has he any affective existence; the less he has of this the more he is a mere animal, not truly in contact with human life" (p. 107). "One's range of sympathy is a measure of his personality, indicating how much or how little of a man he is" (p. 106).

In another context Cooley says, "The personal idea in its more penetrating interpretations involves sympathy, in the sense of primary communication or an entering into and sharing the mind of someone else. When I converse with a man, through words, looks, or other symbols, I have more or less intelligence or communion with him, we get on common ground and have similar ideas and sentiments." (p. 102).

We see from the above that Hume's emphasis upon, and generation of, sympathy is quite in keeping with modern tendencies.

The question at issue here is not whether men do or do not develop benevolent affections towards their fellowmen. That point is freely granted on nearly every hand.¹ The question is, are we born with such affections already flowing without the intervention of stimuli, or do these affections arise in us because of our environmental conditioning through appropriate stimuli and by means of the association of ideas? In the Treatise Hume takes the latter position; in the Enquiry he avoids treating origins and proceeds, therefore, upon the former position. In short, in his earlier work Hume explains the whole moral enterprise by means of the category of pleasure and pain, (both as dynamic and teleological), the passions of love and hate, pride and humility, the association of ideas, the mechanism of reflection, and the judgments of analogy by which we change our position with another through the force of the imagination, and expose ourself to his exciting objects as if we were he in his situation. In his later work he assumes without further examination two original co-ordinate principles, viz., self-interest and benevolence, without attempting to define the nature or force of the latter. His probable reasons for this move we have attempted to set forth earlier in this study.

In Book II, Part ii, Sec. xi of the Treatise, and in many other places referred to earlier, Hume undertakes to explain the generation of sympathy. We shall now attempt to give a running interpretation of these several passages. And to obviate the criticism that Hume has in Book I analyzed the self out of existence, and that he has, therefore, no right to assume it for purposes of analysis in Books II and III, we wish here to call the attention of the reader to a distinction which Hume makes regarding the nature of his labors in Book I and in Books II and III. In the context from which our passage is taken Hume is examining personal identity as it regards our thought and imagination, viz., our understanding. The understanding is concerned with relations

¹Cf. F. H. Giddings, The Principles of Sociology, (1896), p. 17, "The original and elementary subjective fact in society is the consciousness of kind." In his Inductive Sociology, (1901) we find him defining sympathy in this fashion: "The Law of Sympathy. -- Using the word "sympathy" as a collective word for all the feelings that are included in the consciousness of kind, the law of sympathy is: The degree of sympathy decreases as the generality of resemblance increases" (p. 108). And again, "Sympathy diminishes with great rapidity as we pass from the closely related to the remotely related" (p. 109).

C. A. Ellwood, An Intro. to Social Psychology, (1921) distinguishes three kinds of sympathy: (i) organic; (ii) altruistic

which may obtain between identities (existences) which can be given only through sense-impressions, i.e., the existences can only be so given.

Let us set forth what is possibly the most devastating observation which Hume has ever put forth regarding the identity of the person. He says,

"For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception."¹
He then concludes that we are

"nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement."²

This is all that Hume can find when he regards personal identity from the point of view of the thought and understanding, and it is plainly evident that considering the matter so, he could not possibly find anything else, for the understanding regards only the sense-impressions and their consequent ideas; the impressions of reflection and their consequent ideas, viz., pleasures and pains, ideas of desire and aversion, and of approval and disapproval, together with all the variety of relation which may obtain among these separate existences of the mind. No idea of self could possibly appear here, for the self is not the object of any possible perception. It is that which perceives, feels, desires, approves, imagines, and thinks.

Coming back now to the distinction and bearing in mind what our author has said regarding his thought when he turns it upon himself as not perceiving anything but isolated perceptions, we may set forth a question which he proposes to himself, viz.,

"What then gives us so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possessed of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives? In order to answer this question, we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought and imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject;"³ viz., as it concerns Book I; the latter concerns Books II. and III. He has not,

feeling; (iii) reflective or rational sympathy. His psychological analysis is hurried and not very critical. (See pages 245ff.)

¹T. 252.

²T. 252.

³T. 253. Italics ours.

therefore, analyzed the self out of existence in Book I, he simply did not find it by the means employed there. When he comes to Book II, the feeling of ourself is always present with us.

We shall now turn from this digression and proceed to give a running account of the generation of sympathy. The original elements of mind are impressions. These give rise to ideas, simple and complex. Every idea has in its train a bodily feeling which we denominate as pleasant or painful. The feeling concomitant¹ of an idea is determined by two factors: (i) our own constitution and frame; and (ii) the nature of the impression, idea, or object. These two factors are co-operative causes to there arising a feeling. We say, therefore, that the feeling concomitant of an idea is determined by the joint efficacy of these two factors. We instinctively tend to withdraw from an impression or idea which is painful in its feltness; whereas we likewise instinctively tend to embrace and perpetuate an impression or idea that is pleasant.

Ideas which arise immediately from sense-impressions and viceral stimuli we call ideas of the first order. When we reflect upon such an idea we do at the same time reflect upon its feeling concomitant, and this reflection gives rise to impressions of reflection which are copied by the memory and imagination and are denominated ideas of the second order, viz., ideas of desire and aversion. These ideas of desire and aversion are but other names for our passions of love and hate and all their differentiates. But we can go one step further and reflect upon our ideas of desire and aversion. When we do this we are, properly speaking, in the immediate antecedents of the moral judgment. When we reflect upon our ideas of desire and aversion, this reflections gives rise to still new impressions which are copied by the memory and imagination and give rise to ideas of the third order, viz., ideas of approval and disapproval. Now the act of approval is itself an affection. It arises out of the feeling-life of man. The moral judgment or the act of approval (they are both names of the same thing) is an affection in its immediacy, and becomes an idea only after it has fallen into past time and has been copied by the memory and imagination. When so copied it is an idea, and the mind distinguishes it from other ideas as one of approval. Thus it comes about that the moral judgment, the act of approval, is an affection in its immediacy, which has as its objects other affections, viz., desires and aversions.

When we reflect upon our ideas of desire with the end in view of seeing whether they will do or not, i.e., whether the

¹T. 373.

ideas if realized, proceeded upon, would fit in with our well measured plans and purposes and would assist us in becoming the sort of characters we would be, we are then, we say, making moral judgments. If the desire as it stands does not fit in with our well measured plans and purposes, we may elect to alter the desire (by some other desire which is stronger, it can only so be done) in order to create a new object (the self ultimately) which would be the realization of the plans we have projected. Now projected plans themselves are but highly criticized desires. And all desires are but the precipitates of once present and living pleasures considered in the raw.

There are three orders, realms, or kinds of idea in the moral field: We may also speak of these as three kinds of pleasure and pain, if we will, viz.: (i) the idea simple or complex, as it issues in its immediacy from sense-impressions encompassed in its feeling concomitant; (ii) the idea of desire or aversion which issues from reflecting upon an idea of order (i); and (iii) the idea of approval or disapproval which issues from reflecting upon an idea of order (ii). The pleasures arising from the acts of the mind which we have denominated under order (iii) are those only which can properly be called moral pleasures or which Hume so often refers to as peculiar pleasures.

In the act of approval it may not be entirely correct to say that the pleasure which arises from it functions teleologically in anticipation. This is a very delicate point and not easy to decide off hand. We seem to have instances where it functions teleologically and where it does not. When we are criticizing our own desires with the end in view of seeing where they will lead to and whether they will do, we generally take into account the interests of other persons, and insofar as we do this without considering the advantage which may accrue to us by considering their interests, there is an element here which is not related to self-interest. But it is exceedingly difficult to evaluate this element, or to decide for certain whether it actually ever does function in motives to action. To take into account the interests of others would require a certain species of sympathy, if it were to be truly other-regarding, and this is likely to occur in our survey of our own major interest as it is related to, or in conflict with, the interest of others. In regarding our own interest, this throws it into the future; we are hence in a manner sympathizing with ourselves as it is seen in some future situation, from the immediate present. When the realization of this interest is seen to conflict with the interest of others, this seeing of the other person's interest involves an entering into his situation, which is sympathizing with his desires. Thus

in surveying some major interest of our own, there is likely to occur a constant cutting in of other peoples' interests. Now can we appraise and approve another's interest in a manner wholly dissociated with our own major concerns in life? This requires to be answered in the affirmative if we wish to argue for a universal benevolence, original in human nature. We must acknowledge here that we should not care to undertake such a defense. Hume, we believe, had similar sentiments when he was speaking precisely and philosophically.

Yet our author says that, "'Tis only when a character is considered in general," which really according to his refutation of abstract ideas means very little, as Green insisted,

"without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil."¹

To consider a character or mental quality in general can scarcely mean anything else but to consider its utility, its usefulness to society. We are not prepared to say that it is impossible to approve our desires, i.e., our own desires, with this reference, and in so far as this can be done and yet retain within this reference a motive to action, we can be said to act with other-interest as a motive. But then the question arises, how do we come to know what these other-interests are?² Can we come to know them by any other possible manner except by considering what our own would be in similar situations or by the mechanism of sympathy? If by the latter, as seems probable, we arrive at other-interest by the transposition of situation and by presenting to ourself the exciting objects. While in this transposed state we may be capable of acting from other-interest, but we are not entirely sure of this, as we said earlier. It is not just enough to affirm and affirm; a philosophical temper should require of us an explanation of the possibility of the thing we affirm. If we cannot show how the thing can occur which we affirm, then modesty ought to restrain our enthusiasm.

When all is said and done and when we stand in the shoes of some other person by means of the force of the imagination and behold the objects which excite him, it is after all we that behold them, we that feel the passion generated by beholding them; it is we who feel the pleasure or pain which they occasion. If the passion we experience is one which arises from pain, we are determined to avoid this object or to get away from it or to

¹T. 472.

²Cf. C. D. Broad's comment on this point as given above, foot-note 2, p. 113.

circumvent it in some manner. The transition of motive from these factors as related to ourself to that of the person for whom we are temporarily a substitute, is not easy to establish. If the passion generated be painful, this would occasion hate as related to the object, and pity as related to self. This pity for self (the counterpart of which is hate towards the object) would move us to get away from, or to alter, or to destroy the object. Now the great question is, and the thing to be established is, can we take this motive to action which undeniably relates only object and self, and project it in an act of the mind so as to relate the same object to some other self and still retain the motive in ourself to move the other self from the object, or alter, or destroy the object as relieving the other self? We must confess that this would be an exceedingly difficult causal relation to establish, and hence one should not be too dogmatic where there appears so little room for certainty.

Hume observes that there is a great similarity among men. This is all the more true if the people in question has a common national background, similar ideals, the same language and general habits. We also assume for all practical purposes that just as we are affected when confronted with some idea or object, others will likewise be affected by the same idea or object. This of course may have its exceptions, but it is, nevertheless, the common working hypothesis of all mankind. We can only judge the state of another man's passions from our knowledge of our own under similar circumstances. We have no other source, no other means, no other method of getting at our neighbor's emotional state than by judgments issuing from transposition of situation. The same holds true in the most part in entering into our own future states. We are sympathizing with our own future states when we set up goals and approve them. It seems that while we are constituted as we now are, we must remain within our own skin, nor does there appear that there can be any objectivity apart from this personal reference.

Thus when we behold a man in a state of bodily contortion and recognize that we ourself have experienced similar contortions when suffering pain, this beholding or perceiving gives rise to an idea of the man as associated with certain prior painful experiences, which association enlivens our idea of the man. This idea of the man having set in motion the laws of association, we immediately associate this idea of him with certain exciting objects which were our own in prior time. This immediately moves us (by factors in causation) to anticipate and look for objects (causes) which would occasion such pains in the man. The contiguity of the cause of our idea (the man) and of the causes

which occasion the result (the pain in the man) tend to give great vivacity to the idea we have of the man, and this idea transfers its vividness to the associated ideas. The ideas so called and commanded by the imagination give off impressions of reflection which set in motion and make flow (and in a sense are) the passion of hate or withdrawal from the object. Now this flow of emotion we call hate when related to the object, and pity as related to the subject. By the immediate judgment of analogy we take note that these exciting objects are but in idea in ourself, whereas the man of which we have an idea must be connected with actual existing objects, and so by force of the imagination we transfer the pity which was related to ourself to him; and while we are in this state of emotion there carries with this pity a sufficient strength of motive to impel us, at least sometimes, to release him from his exciting objects. Common experience informs us only too well that the force of motive does not always carry to the person suffering. Our emotion wanes very quickly and before we know our good intention peters out and we languish into indifference.

Hume's account of the nature and genesis of sympathy as derived from elements more original was a doctrine very offensive to the Christian theologians of his time. It was offensive on two accounts: (i) because it grounded moral distinctions upon approval, i.e., upon feeling; and (ii) it made love, benevolence, or sympathy a principle subsidiary in origin to self-interest. This latter circumstance need be true only as it regards our deliberate acts. Hume's polemic was pointed directly at the rationalists, and indirectly at the moral sense philosophers who invoked new faculties and senses whenever their difficulties suggested it. He did not believe that philosophers should assume in the beginning of their discourses what should obviously be their chief concern to explain, viz., sympathy, the foundation of the historical development of morality. Hume assumed that some things and principles which have a history evidently are not simple, and since morality has a history, it is likely that sympathy should also have a history. He then proceeded to give an account of its genesis.

We have in the foregoing pages attempted to give an interpretation of Hume's conception of the genesis of sympathy and the moral judgment. If the former seems to be beclouded with an "exasperating ambiguity," as Albee would say, we can only confess that we must have failed in giving full and adequate expression to what in our mind seems fairly clear and intelligible.

CHAPTER VII THE CONSTITUTION OF THE GOOD

SECTION I

The Circumstances under which, and the Contexts of Experience in which, the Good Arises

There are essentially two ways in which the problem of the good has been treated in the development of Western ethical history. On the one hand, (i) ethicists begin by recognizing some ineffable element in experience which transcends all definition and statement. This ineffable "something" they denominate the good. This good is not constituted out of elements of experience but has forever been, now is, and will for all future time be, and its being constitutes it the unalterable and eternal standard in the light of which all experientially ephemeral goods are judged.

On the other hand, (ii) there have been ethicists who, though not necessarily denying that there may be some such perfect good and eternal standard as the rationalists insist upon, contend nevertheless that since we have no certain, nor even probable, knowledge of any such antecedently existent perfect standard, that therefore to begin our ethical researches with assuming that which requires to be explained is to philosophize in a circle, and thus to explain nothing. And since we have no certain or even probable knowledge of any antecedently existent perfect standard, it could not possibly, whether it be or not, afford us any guidance whatever in the moral enterprise. David Hume was an ethicist who embraced this latter persuasion. All knowledge which concerns matters of fact, i.e., existences and their behavior, has its roots in sense-impressions. If it be not so derived it can afford us no guidance in the business of living happily and well.

The good, therefore, for Hume is something which arises in experience, and as it is always something, whatever it be, which defies definition because it is felt as an original simple existence, we cannot really do much more in treating of it than to set forth the circumstances under which, and the contexts of experience in which, it, viz., the good, arises. We shall, therefore, proceed to do this in the terms in which Hume saw it, whereafter we shall attempt to formulate in more precise terms what our author understood to be the relation between this good as felt and as ultimate,

to another species of good called virtue, which is the object of the good which as felt is ultimately indefinable. Virtue or mental qualities useful or agreeable to oneself and to others, is a species of good which is always defined in terms of something else more wide and comprehensive, viz., the good as felt, or to be more precise and frank, virtue is defined in terms of its effects upon a human organism in terms of original irreducible feltnesses, which, taken in the singular, appear to constitute the good in the life of any individual. In setting forth the conditions under which this good arises we will need to quote somewhat heavily from Book II of the Treatise.

Hume observes that,

"'tis evident, that under the term pleasure, we comprehend sensations, which are very different from each other, and which have only such a distant resemblance, as is requisite to make them be expressed by the same abstract term"¹

In short, Hume makes qualitative distinctions within pleasures and the instrument by which he does this is the category of degrees of quality. He is thus enabled to distinguish certain peculiar pleasures which arise from the contemplation of actions which have the qualities of being either useful or agreeable to oneself and to others.

Let us first consider such objects, whether animate or inanimate, which, because of some peculiar relation to ourself -- be this relation one of property, workmanship, composition, production, situation, or relation of kin -- beget in ourself, when we contemplate their beauty or deformity, their usefulness or uselessness, passions of pride or humility, respectively. The former of these passions are pleasant, the latter painful.

Hume divides the passions into direct and indirect.

"By direct passions I understand such as arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. By indirect such as proceed from the same principles, but by the conjunction of other qualities."²

The indirect passions are pride and humility, and love and hatred. Pride and humility have the same object, viz., the self, whereas the passions of love and hatred have as their object something external to the self. These four passions all arise from reflective impressions which may be

"divided into two kinds, viz., the calm and the violent. Of the first kind is the sense of beauty and deformity in action, composition, and external objects. The second are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility."³

¹T. 472

²T. 276.

³T. 277.

This division is by no means exact as Hume himself acknowledges. The calm passions when they arise from the contemplation of beautiful and useful objects as related to self give rise to pride.

Now, though pride and humility are contrary passions, they yet have the same object, viz., the self.¹ How does this come about? We find that beauty or deformity in actions, usefulness and uselessness in actions, and the same qualities in all objects, upon the contemplation of their contrary qualities, beget in us passions of pride or humility, if related to us by one of the relations mentioned above. These contrary qualities in objects and actions give rise to separate pleasures and pains, distinct from the passions which flow from them, and it is only when the actions and objects upon which these contrary qualities are placed, are related to ourself under the conditions specified that we feel the passions of pride and humility. There is here a double relation of idea and impressions -- the idea of some specific relation of action or object to ourself, and the pleasant or painful impressions which the qualities of this action or object occasion. When this double relation of idea and impressions is conjoined we get a result which we denominate as pride or humility. Apart from this idea of specific relation to ourself, the beauty or deformity of an action or object beget in us a separate pleasure or pain.²

"Thus pride is a pleasant sensation, and humility a painful; and upon the removal of the pleasure and pain, there is in reality no pride nor humility. Of this our very feeling convinces us; and beyond our feeling, 'tis in vain to reason or dispute."³

"Now 'tis obvious," says Hume, "that everything useful, beautiful or surprising, agrees in producing a separate pleasure, and agrees in nothing else."⁴ In discussing pride as arising from conditions as specified, he goes on to say that,

"All objects, in a word, that are useful, beautiful or surprising, or are related to such, may, by means of property, give rise to this passion. These agree in giving pleasure, and agree in nothing else. This alone is common to them; and therefore must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect."⁵

¹T. 277.

²T. 285.

³T. 286.

⁴T. 301.

⁵T. 311. Hume teaches that the motives we approve by the moral sense are those which are either useful or immediately agreeable to ourself or to others. When Bentham read this account of virtue in the third book of the Treatise, he describes its effect upon himself in these words: "'I well remember,' he says,

Likewise,

"the very essence of riches consists in the power of procuring the pleasures and conveniences of life. The very essence of this power consists in the probability of its exercise, and in its causing us to anticipate, by a true or false reasoning, the real existence of pleasure. This anticipation of pleasure is, in itself, a very considerable pleasure."¹

Hume considers that usefulness is a very considerable part of the beauty of any object. When he considers beautiful objects apart from the specified relation to self, as mentioned earlier, he finds that,

"Beauty is such an order and construction of parts, as either by the primary constitution of our natures, by custom, or by caprice, is fitted to give a pleasure and satisfaction to the soul.... Pleasure and pain, therefore, are not only necessary attendants of beauty and deformity, but constitute their very essence."²

Hume concludes his lengthy analysis of the causes of pride and humility by observing that

"in whatever light we consider the subject, we may still observe, that the causes of pride and humility correspond exactly to our hypothesis, and that nothing can excite either of these passions, unless it be both related to ourselves, and produces a pleasure or pain independent of the passion. We have not only proved, that a tendency to produce pleasure or pain is common to all the causes of pride and humility, but also that 'tis the only thing, which is common; and consequently is the quality by which they operate. We have further proved, that the most considerable causes of these passions are really nothing but the power of producing either agreeable or uneasy sensations; and therefore that all their effects, and amongst the rest, pride and humility, are derived solely from that origin."³

No commentary is needed here to enlarge upon Hume's conception of the good as it arises in the context of experience, and from

'no sooner had I read that part of the work which touches on this subject than I felt as if scales had fallen from my eyes. I then, for the first time, learnt to call the cause of the people the cause of virtue... That the foundation of all virtue are laid in utility, is there demonstrated, after a few exceptions made, with the strongest evidence: but I see not, any more than Helvetius saw, what need there was for the exceptions'" (Quoted by W. R. Sorley, Hist. Eng. Philos., p. 219).

¹T. 315.

²T. 299.

³T. 324-5.

the circumstances, in question. We shall, therefore, pass on to Hume's account of the causes of love and hatred.

Hume begins by observing that

"As the immediate object of pride and humility is self or that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious; so the object of love and hatred is some other person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious.... Our love and hatred are always directed to some sensible being external to us; and when we talk of self-love, 'tis not in a proper sense, nor has the sensation it produces anything in common with that tender emotion, which is excited by a friend or mistress."¹

It is necessary to distinguish here very clearly between the quality which gives rise to love or hate and the subject or person on whom it is placed.² For it is the same object, viz., some person, a thinking person, which gives rise to contrary passions. We shall now come to see that Hume begins to make distinctions which permit him to emphasize motive as that in actions which is the source of their moral quality. It is necessary to quote here rather largely in order not to alter our author's meaning in any particular.

"But though the object of love and hatred be always some other person, 'tis plain the object is not, properly speaking, the cause of these passions, or alone sufficient to excite them. For since love and hatred are directly contrary in their sensation, and have the same object in common, if the object were also the cause, it would produce these opposite passions in an equal degree; and as they must, from the very first moment, destroy each other, none of them would ever be able to make its appearance. There must, therefore, be some cause different from the objects."³

¹T. 329.

²T. 330; Cf. Adam Smith, Moral Sentiments, "The causes of pain and pleasure, whatever they are, or however they operate, seem to be the objects, which, in all animals, immediately excite those two passions of gratitude and resentment" (p. 136). Smith also agrees with Hume that only thinking persons can be the objects of gratitude and resentment (p. 139).

³T. 330; cf. Adam Smith, Moral Sentiments, p. 133, "Whatever praise or blame can be due to any action, must belong, either, first, to the intention or affection of the heart, from which it proceeds; or, secondly, to the external action or movement of the body, which this affection gives occasion to; or, lastly, to the good or bad consequences, which actually, and in fact proceed from it. These three different things constitute the whole nature

Now, beside the disposition in another person to do ourself some good, viz., sympathy, we may observe that the

"knowledge, wit, good sense, good humour of any person, produce love and esteem; as the opposite qualities, hatred and contempt. The same passions arise from bodily accomplishments, such as beauty, force, swiftness, dexterity; and from their contraries; as likewise from the external advantages and disadvantages of family, possessions, clothes, nation and climate. There is not one of these objects, but what by different qualities may produce love and esteem, or hatred and contempt."¹

It has thus appeared that

"the object of love and hatred is evidently some thinking person; and that the sensation of the former passions is always agreeable, and of the latter uneasy. We may also suppose with some show of probability, that the cause of both these passions is always related to a thinking being, and that the cause of the former produces a separate pleasure, and of the latter a separate uneasiness."

Hume then goes on to add that "as in pride and humility, we have easily been able to make the separation, and to prove, that every cause of these passions produces a separate pain or pleasure, I might here observe the same method with the same success, in examining particularly the several causes of love and hatred."³ Thus Hume can say that,

"Since then the same qualities that produce pride and humility, cause love and hatred; all the arguments that have been employed to prove, that the causes of the former passions excite a pain and pleasure independent of the passion, will be applicable with equal evidence to the causes of the latter."⁴

In order that any passion may arise it is indispensable, according to Hume's theoretical principles, that it be occasioned by either a pleasure or a pain, and for the indirect passions this pleasure or pain must be separable and independent of the passions.

"No trivial or vulgar object," say a stone or some other indifferent thing, "that causes not a pain or pleasure, independent of the passion, will ever, by its property or other relations, either to ourselves or others, be able to produce the affections of pride or humility, love or hatred."⁵

and circumstance of the action, and must be the foundation of whatever quality can belong to it." The last two cannot be the foundation of any praise or blame is granted by every one.

¹T. 330.

²T. 331.

³T. 331.

⁴T. 332.

⁵T. 334.

When now we consider the actions of others as they relate in their effects to our pleasures and pains, Hume feels that

"Nothing is more evident, than that any person acquires our kindness, or is exposed to our ill-will, in proportion to the pleasure or uneasiness we receive from him, and that the passions keep pace exactly with the sensations in all their changes and variations."¹

Hume seems to have rather overstated himself here, for he appears to leave out the consideration of motive. He becomes aware of this a little later and observes that not only is it necessary that pleasure arise from some person, but it is necessary also that it arise from intention. Actions, however, and their effects are the signs by which we get at the motives of a person. We never can behold the motive of another except by indirection. After we have come to some decision as to the motive of the action of another, we can then go on to say as Hume does that,

"By the intention we judge of the actions, and accordingly as that is good or bad, they become causes of love or hatred. ... But here we must make a distinction. If the quality in another, which pleases or displeases, be constant and inherent in her person and character, it will cause love or hatred independent of the intention: but otherwise a knowledge and design is requisite, in order to give rise to these passions."²

In concluding his analysis of the causes of love and hatred, Hume says,

"I have supposed all along, that the passions of love and pride, and those of humility and hatred are similar in their sensations, and that the two former are always agreeable, and the two latter painful."³

No commentary is required here. We see what the good is and how

¹T. 348. ²T.348-9; cf. Letter to Hutcheson, March 16th, 1740, where Hume asks advice on the following reasoning: "When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that from the particular constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects but perceptions in the mind: and this discovery in morals, like the other in physics, is to be regarded as a mighty advancement of the speculative sciences; though like that too, it has little or no influence on practice" (L. I. 39). ³T. 391; cf. Adam Smith, Moral Sentiments, p. 140, where he affirms that pleasure is what the agent experiences as good to himself and a fellow-feeling in others

it arises and how it functions.

We shall now turn to Hume's treatment of the will and the direct passions

"which arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. Of this kind are, desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear."¹

The operation of the indirect passions which we have just been considering arises from pleasure and pain with the conjunction of certain "other qualities." These other qualities are the association of ideas, the association of impressions by the resemblance of their affective tone, and parallel direction,² i.e., by the principle of parallel direction Hume understands the activity of the mind that upon the entrance into consciousness of a passion with a certain end or object all other passions with a similar end or object are likely to appear also.³ Now, the direct passions operate immediately upon the feltness of pleasure or pain without the assistance of these additional other qualities.

Hume does not exactly equate the will with the direct passions. Of it he says,

"I desire it may be observed, that by the will, I mean nothing but the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind."⁴

And somewhat later he says,

"DESIRES arise from good considered simply, and AVERSION is derived from evil. The WILL exerts itself, when either the good or the absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body."⁵

It is here in order to set forth Hume's understanding of the relation of the will to reason in their respective jurisdiction over desire.

"Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, and to give the preference to reason, and to assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates....

In order to shew the fallacy of all this philosophy, I shall

towards himself and others is what he calls good in them. See also p. 155.

¹T. 399. ²T. 381-5; cf. Laird, 201, where Hume is said to account for the indirect passions by means of associationism, and to have "distinguished at least three types of association, viz., (a) the association of ideas, (b) the association, by resemblance, of similar passions, (c) the association of dispositions."

³See McGilvary's interpretation of these "other qualities"

endeavour to prove first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will. The understanding exerts itself after two different ways, as it judges from demonstration or probability; as it regards the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects, of which experience only gives us information.¹ Abstract or demonstrative reasoning, therefore, never influences any of our actions, but only as it directs our judgment concerning causes and effects; which leads us to the second operation of the understanding. 'Tis obvious, that when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity, and are carried to avoid or embrace what will give us this uneasiness or satisfaction.... But 'tis evident in this case, that the impulse arises not from reason, but is only directed by it. 'Tis from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises toward any object: and these emotions extend themselves to the causes and effects of that object, as they are pointed out to us by reason and experience.... And 'tis plain, it cannot be by its means that the objects are able to affect us."²

And since reason alone is incapable of producing any action or giving rise to volition, our author infers, "that the same faculty is as incapable of preventing volition, or of disputing the preference with any passion or emotion."³ He then goes on to add that

"Nothing can oppose or retard the impulse of passion, but a contrary impulse.... We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and reason. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.... 'Tis only in two senses, that any affection can be called unreasonable. First, when a passion, such as hope or fear, grief or joy, despair or security, is founded on the supposition of the existence of objects, which really do not exist. Secondly, when in exerting any passion in action, we chuse means insufficient for the designed end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects.... The moment we perceive the falsehood of any supposition, or the insufficiency of any

in Philos. Rev. vol. XII, pp. 287-8. We agree in this particular.
⁴T. 399. ⁵T. 439.

¹T. 413.

²T. 414.

³T. 414-5.

means our passions yield to our reason without any opposition."¹

It is precisely in the discovery of causes and effects, in the discovery of means to ends, that reason directs and modifies conduct. But the motive, the instigation to action must always without exception arise from feeling, not from reason.

Hume says that there are certain calm desires and tendencies which produce little emotion in the mind and are therefore often taken for determinations of reason:

"These desires are of two kinds; either certain instincts originally implanted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, considered simply as such."²

Here Hume is speaking so loosely that he has to be corrected. Benevolence and resentment are not instincts but passions of a derivative character. Our love of life and the general appetite to good and aversion to evil are no doubt original determinations of our nature. Benevolence and resentment arise from pleasure and pain, but their production requires the interposition of the idea of design in him who is the cause as having willed in some sense the pleasures and pains which give rise to these passions; and this is not all, we require to be satisfied that the pains (in resentment) were unjustly levelled at us. Mr. McGilvary took this passage and two or three others of a similar looseness of meaning, especially the one on page 439, and read them literally. They should be thrown out as inconsistent with Hume's theoretical principles, and should not be quoted in support of an interpretation that makes our author hold to an extensive benevolence in the Treatise in the form of an irreducible principle of human nature.

Beside the direct passions of desire and aversion, joy and grief, hope and fear, and despair and security, there is one other passion which it is difficult to classify either under the indirect or direct passions. This is the passion of curiosity or the love of truth. In its composition seem to enter two elements: (i) self-interest or the immediate satisfactions of the pursuit itself, whatever it may be; and (ii) the anticipated useful consequences which may accrue to mankind from the solution of probable causes. The importance of either element is difficult to appraise in isolation of the other. Our author observes that

"many philosophers have consumed their time, have destroyed their health, and neglected their fortune, in the search of

¹T. 415-6.

²T. 417.

such truths, as they esteemed important and useful to the world, though it appeared from their whole conduct and behaviour, that they were not endowed with any share of public spirit, nor had any concern for the interests of mankind. Were they convinced, that their discoveries were of no consequence, they would entirely lose all relish for their studies, and that though the consequences be entirely indifferent to them; which seems to be a contradiction."¹

The good here is of a mixed nature and very difficult to evaluate. It lies in immediate satisfactions and in the satisfactions attending the anticipation of public approval concerning the successful solution of abstruse and difficult causes.

Hume winds up his analysis of the causes which give rise to the passions, which is but another way of saying that he winds up his analysis of the conditions which give rise to the good, by saying that,

"'Tis easy to observe, that the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that in order to produce an affection of any kind, 'tis only requisite to present some good or evil. Upon the removal of pain and pleasure there immediately follows a removal of love and hatred, pride and humility, desire and aversion, and of most of our reflective or secondary impressions."²

The passions of pride and humility, love and hatred, desire and aversion, are the primary passions of the mind, of which all the other passions, affections, and emotions are but differentiations. In Book II of the Treatise, therefore, Hume has been concerned with analyzing the conditions which give rise to these primary passions, which in themselves are either pleasant or painful, and has found that they all without any single exception take their rise either immediately from good or evil, from pleasure or pain (direct passions) or in conjunction with certain other qualities, viz., association of ideas, association of impressions by the resemblance of their affective tone, and parallel direction (indirect passions). Book II therefore represents Hume's conception of the conditions, circumstances, and contexts in which the good arises. The good in every instance has been pleasure, and evil pain.

It is, indeed, extremely difficult to see on what possibly consistent interpretation one could say that good and evil as felt are anything else but pleasure and pain.³

"There are," says Hume, "three different species of goods, which we are possessed of; the internal satisfactions of our

¹T. 450.

²T. 438.

³Cf. T. 276, 399, 438, 439, 471, 475, 547, 574, E.293-4.

minds, the external advantages of our body, and the enjoyment of such possessions as we have acquired by our industry and good fortune. We are perfectly secure in the enjoyment of the first. The second may be ravished from us, but can be of no advantage to him who deprives us of them. The last only are both exposed to the violence of others, and may be transferred without suffering any loss or alteration; while at the same time, there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities. As the improvement, therefore, of these goods is the chief advantage of society, so the instability of their possession, along with their scarcity, is the chief impediment."¹

Now it is evident that of these three species of good, it is only the first, the internal satisfactions of our mind, which is ultimate in the sense of being the good. The beauty, strength, swiftness, and dexterity of the human form is a good to its possessor only insofar as it is the source of satisfaction to his mind. The same holds true of all possessions, of property.

Riches are goods only in the sense of being productive of pleasurable states of consciousness. Abstract this productive power from riches and they cease to be goods even in the remotest sense of means. They then become wholly indifferent to every one. The end term, therefore, of all the activities of man, whether these be bodily or mental, is pleasure, under which term Hume comprehends all the possible satisfactions of the mind, whether these be denominated happiness, blessedness, enjoyment, serenity, tranquillity, ecstasy, or what not. It is with reference to this first and primary category of the mind, viz., pleasure and pain, that all our activities without exception take their origin, and to which they all return ultimately. All the activities of the body and mind appear to prescribe a perfect circle, insofar as these are unitary acts, by taking their origin from pleasure or the avoidance of pain and returning ultimately to the same points of reference. The category of pleasure and pain functions dynamically as the origin of all human activity, and it likewise functions teleologically, in this same activity, when we attend to its operations precisely and philosophically. This, therefore, is the last, final, and ultimate circle to which all the activities of man pay absolute obedience.

In the course prescribed by the motions in this circle of necessity, there appear vistas wherein we seem to lose touch with both the origin and end of these motions, and we then seem to be moved with designs which seem severed from self in origin as well

as in end. Of this nature are the motions of the mind which make up generated sympathy, limited altruism, and all our judgments regarding the moral worth of qualities in others, which we are sometimes pleased to denominate as virtues or moral goods in their own right. We shall now turn to examine the circumstance which leads us to denominate these qualities of mind as goods in themselves, when obviously they are only mediative goods.

SECTION II

The Good and its Relation to Virtue

There are two ways in which the conduct of men may be viewed: (i) we may look upon a man's motions from the point of view of his own person, his own feeling-life; and when we do this it becomes obvious that that which moves him is some want or uneasiness in his then present state, which want or uneasiness he anticipates to obviate by means of his motions; otherwise it is not easy to form to ourself any conceivable reason why he should ever move. His memory of prior pleasurable states of consciousness gives rise to desires which he may proceed to satisfy or alter as his own sense of morals approves. But always prior to a deliberate motion there is present some want, some need, some uneasiness, which need or uneasiness moves the imagination to present to itself some more desirable state of consciousness. The view of this anticipated pleasurable state of consciousness gives rise to a pleasure as related to the future, and a further uneasiness as related to the then present situation, the combination of which moves the agent to instate or realize the anticipated state, if means to its fulfillment can be suggested by reason. This is how conduct appears from the feeling-life of the individual.

(ii) From the point of view of this same individual, when we enquire what it is in his fellows which is most conducive to his well-being or satisfaction of mind, we find that this lies in certain mental qualities either useful or immediately agreeable to him. When we take a wider view and consider men as united in society by common needs and desires, we see immediately that the things we would emphasize and sanction are certain durable principles of character, viz., mental qualities which are agreeable or useful to each agent himself and to others. These mental qualities we denominate virtues or moral goods which we can say repose in the person possessed of them.

There is in reality no one the good. Each pleasurable state of consciousness is for the then present time a the good. But goods are not all of the same quality nor durability. Some have consequences of such a nature as to cancel the good once

instated. To obviate this difficulty we are equipped with a mechanism whereby we are enabled to survey the probable consequences of satisfying a desire, and if these on the whole seem agreeable, we by that token approve the desire in question. If the feltness and durableness of the consequences of the fulfillment of this desire are of the sort anticipated, we conclude that our judgment was correct, and this action of the mind gives us a considerable pleasure of a calm and stable nature which we call pride or self-approbation.

When we view the qualities of character in another as not particularly related to our own self-interest, we are moved, if they be useful and agreeable, to approve them from the sense of their general usefulness to society, and this action of the mind, this approval, gives rise to a peculiar pleasure, a moral pleasure, which when related to the mental quality in question, moves us to denominate it morally good. This sense of the term good is not substantive but adjectival, and it is in this latter sense in which all virtues are to be understood in Hume's moral philosophy. They are means to the production of moral good in the substantive sense.

"'Tis only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil."¹

Hume is using the terms good and evil here in a double sense; as substantive in their reference to the judger's sentiment, and as adjectival in reference to the mental quality or character. When we consider our own mental qualities and dispositions in reference to their general usefulness, without relation to our particular interest (if this be possible), our approval or disapproval of them as they stand gives rise to pleasures and pains of a peculiar nature, which we denominate moral pleasures or pains respectively. This sense of moral pleasure or pain, or good or evil, is that of the substantive.

Hume holds firmly to the position that the principle of our constitution by which we are led to make moral distinctions is feeling, not reason.

"Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of; though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it

¹T. 472.

with an idea, according to our common custom of taking all things for the same, which have any resemblance to each other."¹ Our author then raises the question:

"Of what nature are these impressions, and after what manner do they operate upon us? Here we cannot remain long in suspense, but must pronounce the impressions arising from virtue, to be agreeable, and that proceeding from vice to be uneasy."²

One more passage will serve to bring out our author's views on this point clearly:

"Now since the distinguishing impressions, by which moral good or evil is known, are nothing but particular pains or pleasures; it follows, that in all enquiries concerning these moral distinctions, it will be sufficient to shew the principles, which make us feel a satisfaction or uneasiness from the survey of any character, in order to satisfy us why the character is laudable or blameable. An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? Because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to feel a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very feeling constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no further; nor do we enquire into the cause of the satisfaction."³

Yet these approvals or moral judgments are not infallible. It is not entirely correct to say that

"An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious ... because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind,"

unless in this view be included the idea of the usefulness or agreeableness of the action, sentiment, or character in question. Hume goes on to add that,

"We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: but in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous."⁴

This is indeed a very subtle distinction and it takes its rise from the interposition of the idea of general usefulness, without particular relation to self-interest, in the contemplation of an action, sentiment, or character.

We have mentioned earlier that Hume makes qualitative distinctions within pleasures, viz.,

"that under the term pleasure, we comprehend sensations, which are very different from each other, and which have only such

¹T. 470.

²T. 470.

³T. 471.

⁴T. 471.

a distant resemblance, as is requisite to make them be expressed by the same abstract term."¹

He is thus enabled to distinguish moral pleasures from pleasures not so qualified. In fact, it is highly questionable whether any two pleasures are identical or the same in affective tone, though they may be very similar.

We may sum up these remarks on the good and its relation to virtue by saying that the good is more of a collective term expressing pleasurable states of consciousness both present and in anticipation; and that the most considerable means to the preservation and instatement and re-instatement of these desirable states of consciousness, in a society composed of predominantly selfish individuals with limited means of support, are the virtues, and especially justice and benevolence. The latter are moral goods, properties, of an adjectival nature, and they function in society as the causes which have made the historical development of morality possible, as well as making possible to the mind of man the most serene and tranquil and satisfying pleasures which it is capable of experiencing.

When Hume, therefore, speaks of mental qualities or virtues as moral goods in their own right, he means no more than that they are adjectival goods, which function productively as the occasions of substantive goods which are peculiar pleasures, which attend the perception of generous motives in oneself or in others.

¹T. 472.

